THROUGH · THE · YEAR · WITH · THE · POETS ·

· EDITED · BY ·
· OSCAR · FAY · ADAMS ·

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Through the Year with the Poets

EDITED BY

OSCAR FAY ADAMS.

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MAY

EDITED BY

OSCAR FAY ADAMS

Thou pulse of joy, whose throb beats time
For daisied field, for blossoming spray!
To dance of leaf and song bird's chime
Set all the prose of life to rhyme.
Ring in the May!

Mary Elizabeth Blake.

BOSTON
D. LOTHROP AND COMPANY
FRANKLIN AND HAWLEY STREETS

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BOSTON:
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PREFACE.

SINCE Chaucer's time the month of May has never lacked its laureates to sing its praises in melodious verse. But the May poetry of an earlier day, like the most of Nature-inspired verse, was more general and didactic in its character than at present. The Victorian poets have something in view beyond the glorification of the month. They do not rest content with telling us that in May the grass is green and that the flowers are fresh and gay, but they let the very breath of blossom time blow through their lines. So, in this volume, the praise of May is not the only theme, since there is also here the odorous fragrance of apple blooms, the echo of bird songs, the Maytime joy as well as the Maytime sadness. All these have their place in any attempt to adequately present the spirit of the month, for all these have found frequent utterance in English verse.

The lines upon the title-page were written for that place by Mrs. Mary E. Blake; the poems by Mr. Willis Boyd Allen, Mrs. Jane Goodwin Austin, Mrs. Meteyard, and Mr. William Hamilton Hayne have also

been generously given to the editor as original contributions.

The publishers gratefully acknowledge their obligations to Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co.; Cupples, Upham & Co.; Roberts Brothers; Ticknor & Co.; Lee & Shepard; Chas. Scribner's Sons; and the Century Company, as well as to Miss Emily C. Weeks and Mr. Parke Godwin for the use of certain poems of which they control the copyright.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., April 18, 1886.

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IDLE DAYS.

Sing me a song of idle days,
When rosy and white are the new-blown mays,
And rosy and white on the wanton breeze
The petals fall from the apple trees,
And under the hedge where the shade lies wet,
Are children, picking the violet!
Sing me a song of idle days,
When Spring is queen over woods and ways!

. . . . . .

FRANCIS WILLIAM BOURDILLON.

MAY.

IN JOYOUS SPRING.

LIKE souls that balance joy and pain,
With tears and smiles from heaven again
The maiden Spring upon the plain
Came in a sunlit fall of rain.
In crystal vapor everywhere
Blue isles of heaven laughed between,
And, far in forest-deeps unseen,
The topmost elm-tree gathered green
From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song:
Sometimes the throstle whistled strong:
Sometimes the sparhawk, wheeled along,
Hushed all the groves from fear of wrong:
By grassy capes with fuller sound
In curves the yellowing river ran,
And drooping chestnut-buds began
To spread into the perfect fan,
Above the teeming ground.

ALFRED TENNYSON.
Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere.

IS NOT THE MAYTIME NOW ON EARTH.

ORPHEUS.

Is not the Maytime now on earth,
When close against the city wall
The folk are singing in their mirth,
While on their heads the Mayflowers fall?

THE SIRENS.

Yes, May is come, and its sweet breath
Shall well-nigh make you weep to-day,
And pensive with swift-coming death,
Shall ye be satiate of the May.

WILLIAM MORRIS.
The Life and Death of Jason.

MAY HAS COME IN.

MAY has come in, — young May, the beautiful,
Weaving the sweetest chaplet of the year.
Along the eastern corridors she walks,
What time the clover rocks the earliest bee,
Her feet a flush with sunrise, and her veil
Floating in breezy odors o'er her hair;
And ample garments, fluttering at the hem,
With pleasing rustle round her sandal-shoon.

THOMAS BUCHANAN READ.
The New Pastoral.

CUCKOO! CUCKOO!

(SONG FOR THE FIRST OF MAY.)

"Cuckoo! cuckoo!" it haunts my way;
I hear that sweet note all the day,
From glen to glen, from brae to brae,
While I pursue my grassy way
Through Ettrick vale and Yarrow!

"Cuckoo! cuckoo!" it still doth say,
The very spoken breath of May,
But viewless still from brae to brae,
As if a spirit led my way,
Through all the length of Yarrow!

How many a city drudge this day,
At large with me may sigh to stray,
Drinking deep draughts of breezy May,
With "Cuckoo! cuckoo!" all the way,
To hymn their march through Yarrow!

Poor city scribes! it makes me grieve
To think how ye from inky sleeve
And fretful quill find no reprieve,
Nor faction's babbling mart may leave
To taste sweet May in Yarrow.

"Cuckoo! cuckoo!" it haunts my way,
Now here, now there, from brae to brae;
It floats and wanders with light play
From dark pine wood to castle grey,
And shepherd's cot in Yarrow!

Ye lords and ladies gay, who ride
Through London parks in dusty pride,
I wish you all might here abide,
With wimpling waters at your side,
And cuckoo's note in Yarrow!

JOHN STUART BLACKIE.

*BELTANE.**

(FROM THE CELTIC OF FINN MACCUMHIALL.)

OH, mild May day, in Fōdla's clime
Of fairy color, the laughing prime
Of leafy summer from year to year,
I would that Leagha were with me here
To lie and listen down in a dell
To Bauba's blackbirds warbling well,
And her cuckoos crying with constant strain,
Welcome, welcome the bright Beltane;
When the swallows are skimming the shore,
And the swift steed stoops to the fountain,
And the weak, fair bog-down grows on the moor,
And the heath spreads her hair on the mountain,
And the signs of heaven are in consternation,
And the rushing planets such radiance pour,
That the sea lies lulled, and the generation
Of flowers awakes once more.

ALFRED PERCEVAL GRAVES.

* May Day.

FIRST NIGHT OF MAY.

First night of May! and the soft-silvered moon
Brightens her semicircle in the blue;
And mid the tawny orange of the west
Shines the full star that ushers in the even!
On the low meadows by the Luggie-side
Gathers a semi-lucent mist, and creeps
In busy silence, shrouding golden furze
And leafy copsewood. Through the tortuous dell
Like an eternal sound the Luggie flows
In unreposing melody.

David Gray.
The Luggie.

CORINNA'S GOING A-MAYING.

Get up, get up for shame, the blooming morn
Upon her wings presents the god unshorn.
See how Aurora throws her fair
Fresh-quilted colors through the air;
Get up, sweet slug-a-bed, and see
The dew bespangling herb and tree.
Each flower has wept, and bowed toward the East,
Above an hour since, yet you not dressed,
Nay! not so much as out of bed;
When all the birds have matins said,
And sung their thankful hymns; 'tis sin,
Nay, profanation to keep in,
Whenas a thousand virgins on this day
Spring, sooner than the lark to fetch in May.

Rise, and put on your foliage, and be seen
To come forth like the springtime, fresh and green,
And sweet as Flora. Take no care
For jewels for your gown or hair;
Fear not, the leaves will strew
Gems in abundance upon you;
Besides, the childhood of the day has kept
Against you come, some orient pearls unwept.
Come, and receive them while the light
Hangs on the dew locks of the night,
And Titan on the eastern hill
Retires himself, or else stands still
Till you come forth. Wash, dress, be brief in praying;
Few beads are best, when once we go a-Maying.

Come, my Corinna, come; and, coming, mark
How each field turns a street, each street a park
Made green, and trimmed with trees; see how
Devotion gives each house a bough
Or branch; each porch, each door, ere this,
An ark or tabernacle is,
Made up of whitethorn neatly interwove,
As if here were those cooler shades of love.
Can such delights be in the street
And open fields, and we not see't?
Come, we'll abroad, and let's obey
The proclamation made for May:
And sin no more, as we have done, by staying;
But, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

There's not a budding boy or girl, this day,
But is got up and gone to bring in May.
A deal of youth, ere this, is come
Back, and with whitethorn laden, home.
Some have dispatched their cakes and cream
Before that we have left to dream:
And some have wept, and wooed, and plighted troth,
And chose their priest, ere we can cast off sloth;
Many a green gown has been given,
Many a kiss, both odd and even,
Many a glance, too, has been sent
From out the eye, love's firmament;
Many a jest told of the key's betraying
This night, and locks picked, yet we are not a-Maying.

Come, let us go, while we are in our prime,
And take the harmless folly of the time.
We shall grow old apace and die
Before we know our liberty.
Our life is short, and our days run
As fast away as does the sun,
And as a vapor, or a drop of rain
Once lost, can ne'er be found again;
So when or you or I are made
A fable, song, or fleeting shade,
All love, all liking, all delight
Lies drowned with us in endless night.
Then while time serves, and we are but decaying,
Come, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

ROBERT HERRICK.

MAY DAY.

I WALKED, in the "sweet season's" opening,
Through budding groves, in downy wealth arrayed;
For bliss the unfettered streamlet danced and played,
But dead leaves strewed the ground,—no sign of spring!
O sweet south wind, I cried, the blossoms bring!
When May on these dull eyes her sceptre laid;
I turned, and lo! fresh green in field and glade,
And sweet young life in every growing thing.
So through a barren world we listless move,
Though fair the distant scene, yet close to us
Dead leaves of disappointment and despair.
Then suddenly appears the enchanter, Love,
Touches us with his sceptre luminous,
And joy's bright blossoms greet us everywhere.

MRS. MARION GREENWOOD [LUNT] METEYARD.

MAY DAY SONG.

OUT from cities haste away,
This is earth's great holiday;
Who can labor while the hours
In with songs are bringing May
Through the gaze of buds and flowers,
Through the golden pomp of day?
Haste, O haste!
'Tis sin to waste

In dull work so sweet a time,
Dance and song
Of right belong
To the hours of spring's sweet prime.
Golden beams and shadows brown,
Where the roofs of knotted trees
Fling a pleasant coolness down,
Footing it, the young May sees;
In their dance the breezes now
Dimple every pond you pass;
Shades of leaves, from every bough
Leaping, beat the dappled grass.
Birds are noisy, — bees are humming,
All because the May's a coming;
All the tongues of Nature shout,
Out from town, from cities out!
Out from every busy street!
Out from every darkened court!
Through the field-paths let your feet
Lingering go in pleasant thought!
Out through dells the violet's haunting!
Out where golden rivers run!
Where the wallflower's gayly flaunting
In the livery of the sun.
Trip it through the shadows, hiding
Down in hollow winding lanes!
Where through leaves the sunshine gliding
Deep with gold the woodland stains!
Where, in all her pomp of weeds,
Nature, asking but the thanks
Of our pleasure, richly pranks

Painted heaths and wayside banks,
Smooth-mown lawns and green deep meads!
Leave the noisy bustling town
For still glade and breezy down!
Haste away
To meet the May,
This is earth's great holiday!

WILLIAM COX BENNETT.

THE ENTERING MAY.

WHERE shall we keep the holiday,
And duly greet the entering May?
Too strait and low our cottage doors,
And all unmeet our carpet floors;
Nor spacious court, nor monarch's hall,
Suffice to hold the festival.
Up and away! where haughty woods
Front the liberated floods:
We will climb the broad-backed hills,
Hear the uproar of their joy;
We will mark the leaps and gleams
Of the new-delivered streams,
And the murmuring rivers of sap
Mount in the pipes of the trees,
Giddy with day, to the topmost spire,
Which for a spike of tenderest green
Bartered its powdery cap;
And the colors of joy in the bird,
And the love in its carol heard,

Frog and lizard in holiday coats,
And turtle brave in his golden spots;
While cheerful cries of crag and plain
Reply to the thunder of river and main.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.
May-Day.

WHEN BEECHES BRIGHTEN EARLY MAY.

WHEN beeches brighten early May
And young grass shines along her way;
When Joy first bares his sunny head,
Leaned over brook and blossom-bed;
When smell of spring fills all the air,
And wooing birds make music there;
When naught of sound or sight shall grieve
From quiring morn to quiet eve, —
My restless thoughts are forward cast.
This loveliness, — it cannot last;
The merry field, the ringing bough,
Shall silent be as tuneful, now;
Chill, warning winds shall hither roam,
The Summer's children hasten home:
That blue solicitude of sky
Bent over beauty doomed to die,
Ere long shall, pitying, witness here
The yielded glory of the year.

JOHN VANCE CHENEY.
In the Century Magazine.

ONE SWALLOW.

THE day was grey and dark and chill;
Though May had come to meet us,
So closely April lingered still,
She had no heart to greet us;
When, with a swift and sudden flight,
Wind-blown o'er hill and hollow,
Two grey wings swept across my sight,
And lo! the first wild swallow.

"Alas, fair bird! thy little breast,
That cuts the air so fleetly,
Should still have pressed its southern nest
Till June was piping sweetly.
In spite of cheery song and voice,
Thou brave and blithe newcomer,
I cannot in thy joy rejoice:
One swallow makes no summer."

Thus, in my thought I fain would say;
Meantime, on swift wing speeding,
Its wild and winning roundelay
The bird sang on unheeding;
Of odorous fields and drowsy noons,
Of slow tides landward creeping,
Of woodlands thrilled with jocund tunes,
Of soft airs hushed and sleeping:

He sang of waving forest heights
With strong green boughs upspringing;

Of faint stars pale with drowsy lights,
In dusky heavens swinging;
Of nests high-hung in cottage eaves,
Of yellow cornfields growing,
And, through the long, slim, fluttering leaves,
The sleepy winds a-blowing;

He sang until my soul took heed
Of warm, soft-falling showers,
Of dells high-piled with tangled leaves,
And gay with tangled flowers;
Of life, and love, and hope's bright crew,
This brave and blithe newcomer:
And so — and so — at last I knew
One swallow made the summer!

MRS. MARY ELIZABETH [MCGRATH] BLAKE.

SONG ON MAY MORNING.

Now the bright morning star, day's harbinger,
Comes dancing from the East, and leads with her
The flowery May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose.
Hail, bounteous May, that dost inspire
Mirth and youth and warm desire;
Woods and groves are of thy dressing,
Hill and vale doth boast thy blessing.
Thus we salute thee with our early song,
And welcome thee, and wish thee long.

JOHN MILTON.

THE VOICE OF THE GRASS.

HERE I come, creeping, creeping everywhere:
By the dusty roadside,
On the sunny hillside,
Close by the noisy brook,
In every shady nook,
I come creeping, creeping everywhere.

Here I come, creeping, smiling everywhere:
All around the open door,
Where sit the aged poor,
Here where the children play,
In the bright and merry May,
I come creeping, creeping everywhere.

Here I come, creeping, creeping everywhere:
In the noisy city street
My pleasant face you'll meet,
Cheering the sick at heart,
Toiling his busy part,
Silently creeping, creeping everywhere.

Here I come, creeping, creeping everywhere:
You cannot see me coming,
Nor hear my low sweet humming;
For in the starry night,
And the glad morning light,
I come quietly creeping everywhere.

Here I come, creeping, creeping everywhere:
More welcome than the flowers,

In summer's pleasant hours;
The gentle cow is glad,
And the merry bird not sad,
To see me creeping, creeping everywhere.

Here I come, creeping, creeping everywhere:
When you're numbered with the dead
In your still and narrow bed,
In the happy spring I'll come
And deck your silent home,
Creeping, silently creeping everywhere.

Here I come, creeping, creeping everywhere:
My humble song of praise
Most joyfully I raise
To Him at whose command
I beautify the land,
Creeping, silently creeping everywhere.

MRS. SARAH [ROBERTS] BOYLE.

THE QUEEN OF THE MAY.

HERE's a bank with rich cowslips and cuckoo-buds strewn,
To exalt your bright looks, gentle Queen of the May!
Here's a cushion of moss for your delicate shoon,
And a woodbine to weave you a canopy gay.

Here's a garland of red maiden-roses for you;
Such a delicate wreath is for beauty alone;
Here's a golden kingcup, brimming over with dew,
To be kissed by a lip just as sweet as its own.

Here are bracelets of pearl from the fount in the dale,
That the nymph of the wave on your wrists doth bestow;
Here's a lily-wrought scarf your sweet blushes to hide,
Or to lie on that bosom, like snow upon snow.

Here's a myrtle enwreathed with a jessamine band,
To express the fond twining of beauty and youth;
Take the emblem of love in thy exquisite hand,
And do thou sway the evergreen sceptre of truth.

Then around you we'll dance, and around you we'll sing,
To soft pipe and tabor we'll foot it away;
And the hills and the dales and the forest shall ring,
While we hail you our lovely young Queen of the May.

GEORGE DARLEY.

THE ARBUTUS.

THIS flower has lived and breathed and moved,
And borne 'mong men a human name;
Nay, more, it loved and was beloved,
And filled the first world with its fame.

It still might in our gardens thrive
But that high love is out of date;
We rather choose to build and wive,
And trade in souls at market's rate.

She rather chose to be a flower,
Hid in the deep and silent wood;
And only shows her perfumed power
When lovers breathe its solitude.

JOHN ALBEE.

MAY.

THE earth can, like the soul, but once be wed.
The sun, howe'er his love may slacken or stray,
In March woos hotly, wearies of delay
Ere fitful April's budding-time be sped,
And claims his bridal blossom-time in May.
The sacred rites bird-voices overhead
Acclaim in antiphon from dawn of day:
And for the drapery of the spousal bed
The beech brings leaflets fresh from downy sheaths;
There spreads the oak its cool green light, and here
The elm its cool green shadow; far and near
The apple flushes and the whitethorn breathes.
Such close embraces passion never wreathes
As those that pledge the promise of the year.

HENRY GAY HEWLETT.
An English Year.

ON THE THAMES.

O SHOUT, for the morning
Hath heard April's warning,
And earth is adorning
  The bride-bed of May!
O shout, for the lover
Of flowers shall discover
Mid the haunts of the plover
  New snowflakes to-day!

Low down on the river
Rathe aspen leaves shiver,
And soaring larks quiver
  Aloft in the sun:
The whole world is ringing
With laughter and singing;
Why need we be clinging
  To grief that is gone?

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS.

A MAY MEMORY.

A COTTAGE in a winding lane,
  Reed-roofed and clasped with jessamine;
A face seen through a window-pane
  With charms that any lad would win.

A pair of eyes as sapphire blue,
  A rivulet of golden hair,

Cheeks shaming e'en the rose's hue,
Fresh vermeil lips of beauty rare.

A morning in the month of May,
A laddie standing at a gate;
A look, but not a word to say;
A sigh from *one* without a mate.

A little chamber, hawthorn-sweet,
A head low resting on a hand,
Slow pacing of two dainty feet,
A vacant stare out on the land.

A tiny drop of liquid pearl,
A joy gone nothing can restore;
The funeral of a village girl,
A grave and peace forevermore.

EDWARD CAPERN.

MAYFLOWERS.

IF you catch a breath of sweetness,
And follow the odorous hint
Through woods where the dead leaves rustle,
And the golden mosses glint,

Along the spicy sea coast,
Over the desolate down,
You will find the dainty Mayflowers
When you come to Plymouth town.

Where the shy spring tends her darlings,
And hides them away from sight,
Pull off the covering leaf-sprays,
And gather them pink and white,

Tinted by mystical moonlight,
Freshened by frosty dew,
Till the fair, transparent blossoms
To their pure perfection grew.

Then carry them home to your lady,
For flower of the spring is she,
Pink and white, and dainty and slight,
And lovely as lovely can be.

Shall they die because she is fair,
Or live because she is sweet?
They will know for which they were born,
But you, — must wait at her feet.

MRS. LOUISE [CHANDLER] MOULTON.

SEEKING THE MAYFLOWER.

THE sweetest sound our whole year round:
'Tis the first robin of the spring!
The song of the full orchard choir
Is not so fine a thing.

Glad sights are common; Nature draws
Her random pictures through the year,
But oft her music bids us long
Remember those most dear.

To me, when in the sudden spring
I hear the earliest robin's lay,
With the first trill there comes again
One picture of the May.

The veil is parted wide, and lo,
A moment, though my eyelids close,
Once more I see that wooded hill
Where the arbutus grows.

I see the village dryad kneel,
Trailing her slender fingers through
The knotted tendrils, as she lifts
Their pink pale flowers to view.

Once more I dare to stoop beside
The dove-eyed beauty of my choice,
And long to touch her careless hair,
And think how dear her voice.

My eager, wandering hands assist
With fragrant blooms her lap to fill,
And half by chance they meet her own,
Half by our young hearts' will.

Till at the last, those blossoms won,
Like her, so pure, so sweet, so shy,

Upon the grey and lichened rocks
Close at her feet I lie.

Fresh blows the breeze through hemlock trees,
The fields are edged with green below;
And naught but youth and hope and love
We know or care to know.

Hark! from the moss-clung apple bough,
Beyond the tumbled wall, there broke
That gurgling music of the May:
'Twas the first robin spoke.

I heard it, ay, and heard it not,
For little then my glad heart wist
What toil and time should come to pass,
And what delight be missed;

Nor thought thereafter, year by year
Hearing that fresh yet olden song,
To yearn for unreturning joys
That with its joy belong.

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN.

IN MAY.

OH, sing! the swallows are in tune,
Forget the rain of yesterday;
A few more suns will bring us June,
And this, 'tis Chaucer's month, — 'tis May.

THOMAS WILLIAM PARSONS.
May Day.

SPRING SONG.

CREEP slowly up the willow wand,
  Young leaves! and in your lightness,
Teach us that spirits which despond
  May wear their own pure brightness.

Into new sweetness slowly dip,
  O May!—advance; yet linger;
Nor let the ring too swiftly slip
  Down that new-plighted finger.

Thy bursting blooms, O Spring, retard!
  While thus thy raptures press on,
How many a joy is lost, or marred
  How many a lovely lesson.

For each new sweet thou giv'st us, those
  Which first we loved are taken:
In death their eyes must violets close
  Before the rose can waken.

Ye woods, with ice-threads tingling late,
  Where late was heard the robin,
Your chants that hour but antedate
  When autumn winds are sobbing!

Ye gummy buds, in silken sheath
  Hang back, content to glisten!
Hold in, O earth, thy charmèd breath!
  Thou air, be still and listen!

AUBREY THOMAS DE VERE.

MAY.

I SAW a child, once, that had lost its way
In a great city: ah, dear Heaven, such eyes!
A far-off look in them, as if the skies
Her birthplace were. So looks to me the May.
April is winsome; June is glad and gay;
May glides betwixt them in such wondering wise,
Lovely as dropped from some far Paradise,
And knowing, all the while, herself astray.
Or, is the fault with us? Nay, call it not
A fault, but a sweet trouble. Is it we,
(Catching some glimpse of our own destiny
In May's renewing touch, some yearning thought
Of Heaven, beneath her resurrecting hand)
We who are aliens, lost in a strange land?

MRS. CAROLINE ATHERTON [BRIGGS] MASON.
In The Century Magazine.

EXPECTATION.

WHITE-FLOWERED orchards where young buds unfold,
Sweet-smelling, shining, shower-crumpled grass,
Rainbows above where late the rain-cloud was,
Now a bright harmless heap of vapory gold.
The sharp rim of the slim new moon on high
Is cut against the rosy western sky;

The fresh breeze curves the same crisp ripple soft
On the green earth as on the smooth light stream,
Wherein the double sky and landscape gleam
With every cloud the sunshine smites aloft.
Ah! restless, fond, insatiate human heart,
Filled full with all the pleasure of the spring,
Yet holding it but as a little thing,
And pressing forward, yearning to take part
In something wider, larger, fairer still,
Nor noting beauty of sky, field or hill.
The clear horizon, the far-shining sea
Invite and beckon: all the bloom and glow
Seem but an earnest of what time will show,
And the pulse leaps with wild expectancy.

EMMA LAZARUS.

THE GREEN THINGS GROWING.

THE green things growing, the green things growing,
The faint, sweet smell of the green things growing!
I should like to live, whether I smile or grieve,
Just to watch the happy life of my green things growing.

O the fluttering and the pattering of those green things growing!
How they talk each to each, when none of us are knowing;

In the wonderful white of the weird moonlight
Or the dim dreamy dawn when the cocks are crowing.

I love, I love them so, — my green things growing!
And I think that they love me, without false showing;
For by many a tender touch, they comfort me so much,
With the soft mute comfort of green things growing.

And in the rich store of their blossoms glowing
Ten for one I take they're on me bestowing:
Oh, I should like to see, if God's will it may be,
Many, many a summer of my green things growing!

But if I must be gathered for the angels' sowing,
Sleep out of sight awhile, like the green things growing,
Though dust to dust return, I think I'll scarcely mourn,
If I may change into green things growing.

MRS. DINAH MARIA [MULOCK] CRAIK.

SPRING.

BIRDS' love and birds' song
Flying here and there,
Birds' song and birds' love,
And you with gold for hair!

Birds' song and birds' love,
  Passing with the weather,
Men's song and men's love,
  To love once and for ever.

Men's love and birds' love,
  And women's love and men's!
And you my wren with a crown of gold,
  You my Queen of the wrens!
You the Queen of the wrens!
  We'll be birds of a feather;
I'll be King of the Queen of the wrens,
  And all in a nest together.

ALFRED TENNYSON.

ON MAY.

AMONG the changing months, May stands confessed
The sweetest, and in fairest colors dressed!
Soft as the breeze that fans the smiling field;
Sweet as the breath that opening roses yield;
Fair as the color lavish Nature paints
On virgin flowers free from unodorous taints!
To rural scenes thou temp'st the busy crowd,
Who, in each grove, thy praises sing aloud!
The blooming belles and shallow beaux, strange sight,
Turn nymphs and swains, and in their sports delight.

JAMES THOMSON.

THE DAISY.

On bookès for to read I me delight,
And to them give I faith and full credence,
And in mine heart have them in reverence,
So heartily that there is gamè none
That fro my bookès maketh me to gone,
But it be seldom on the holy-day:
Save, certainly, that when the month of May
Is comen, and that I hear the fowlès sing,
And that the flowers ginnen for to spring, —
Farewell my book and my devotion!
Now have I then eke this condition,
As that, of all the flowers in the mead,
Then love I most these flowers white and red,
Such that men callen daisies in our town.
To them I have so great affection,
As I said erst, when comen is the May
That in my bed there daweth me no day
That I n'am up and walking in the mead,
To seen this flower against the sunnè sprede.
When it upriseth early by the morrow,
That blissful sight softeneth all my sorrow;
So glad am I, when that I have presence
Of it, to done it allè reverence,
As she that is of all flowers the flower,
Fulfillèd of all virtue and honor,
And ever alike fair and fresh of hue;
And ever I love it and ever alike new,
And ever shall till that mine heartè die.

Geoffrey Chaucer.
The Legend of Good Women. (*Prologue.*)

PHILLIDA AND CORYDON.

In the merry month of May,
In a morn by break of day,
Forth I walked by the woodside,
Whenas May was in his pride.
There I spièd, all alone,
Phillida and Corydon.

Much ado there was, God wot!
He would love, and she would not;
She said, "Never man was true;"
He said, "None was false to you;"
He said, he had loved her long;
She said, Love should have no wrong.

Corydon would kiss her then;
She said, "Maids must kiss no men
Till they did for good and all:"
Then she made the shepherd call
All the heavens to witness truth,
"Never loved a truer youth!"

Thus, with many a pretty oath,
Yea and nay, and faith and troth,
Such as silly shepherds use
When they will not love abuse,
Love, which had been long deluded,
Was with kisses sweet concluded;
And Phillida, with garlands gay,
Was made the lady of the May.

NICHOLAS BRETON.

THE RETURN OF THE NIGHTINGALE.

Borne on the warm wing of the western gale,
How tremulously low is heard to float,
Through the green budding thorns that fringe the vale,
The early nightingale's prelusive note.
'Tis Hope's instinctive power that, through the grove
Tells how benignant heaven revives the earth;
'Tis the soft voice of young and timid love
That calls these melting sounds of sweetness forth.
With transport, once, sweet bird, I hailed thy lay,
And bade thee welcome to our shades again,
To charm the wandering poet's pensive way,
And soothe the solitary lover's pain;
But now! — such evils in my lot combine,
As shut my languid sense to Hope's dear voice and thine.

Mrs. Charlotte [Turner] Smith.

A MORN OF MAY.

All the clouds about the sun lay up in golden creases,
(Merry rings the maiden's voice that sings at dawn of day;)
Lambkins woke and skipped around to dry their dewy fleeces,
So sweetly as she caroled, all on a morn of May.

Quoth the Sergeant, "Here I'll halt; here's wine of joy for drinking;
To my heart she sets her hand, and in the strings doth play;
All among the daffodils, and fairer to my thinking,
And fresh as milk and roses, she sits this morn of May."

Quoth the Sergeant, "Work is work, but any ye might make me,
If I worked for you, dear lass, I'd count my holiday.
I'm your slave for good and all, an' if ye will but take me,
So sweetly as ye carol upon this morn of May."

"Medals count for worth," quoth she, "and scars are worn for honor;
But a slave an' if ye be, kind wooer, go your way."
All the nodding daffodils woke up and laughed upon her.
O! sweetly did she carol, all on that morn of May.

Gladsome leaves upon the bough, they fluttered fast and faster,
Fretting brook, till he would speak, did chide the dull delay;
"Beauty! when I said a slave, I think I meant a master;
So sweetly as ye carol all on this morn of May.

"Lass, I love you! Love is strong, and some men's
hearts are tender."
Far she sought o'er wood and wold, but found not
aught to say;
Mounting lark nor mantling cloud would any counsel
render,
Though sweetly she had caroled upon that morn of
May.

Shy, she sought the wooer's face, and deemed the
wooing mended;
Proper man he was, good sooth, and one would have
his way:
So the lass was made a wife, and so the song was
ended.
O! sweetly did she carol all on that morn of May.

JEAN INGELOW.

MAY.

NOT the word, but the soul of the thing!
Not the name, but the spirit of spring!
And so, at morning early,
Through hedgerows fresh and pearly,
Bedecked with hawthorn branches
And apple blossoms gay,
Her golden hair around her,
As if some god had crowned her,
Across the dewy woodland
Comes dancing in the May.

O Spirit of hope and of truth!
O Spirit of beauty and youth!
Thine still the olden glory;
Thine still the song and story
Of joyous lads and lasses,
Of birds upon the spray,
Of perfumed airs a-blowing,
Of green things glad with growing,
Of all the world grown young again
To welcome in the May.

MRS. MARY ELIZABETH [MCGRATH] BLAKE.

MAY MEMORIES.

THE spring was very glad upon the hills;
The sweet pale wind-flowers waited in the grass;
And the white lilies, in the river's glass,
Floated and fell, with the delight that fills
The Maytime. So I stood upon the sills
Of Faerie (for such to me the wood
And all the glamours folded in its flood
Of greenery were), thinking the joy, that kills
March-sadness in the flowers, might make me whole.
But, as I went, the crocus-flames did borrow
White lights and sad, as sombre as my soul;
Ay me (the linnet sang) sweet love, sweet sorrow!
A golden evening and a sad to-morrow!
Spring could not hold from mocking at my dole.

Life unfulfilled! The windy scents that shook
The pink-blown glory of the apple trees,
The surge of song that hung upon the breeze,
The pale eyes of the primrose-stars, that took
Faint heart to peer into the painted book
Flower-writ by spring upon the wide-waved leas;
These all made moan of my dis-ease:
And as I pulled the cresses in the brook,
The thin slow water broke against my hand,
With some faint cadence of blithe murmuring
Broken to sadness. Over all the land,
As I drew near, the linnets ceased their song,
Saying (meseemed), "What wight goes thus in spring,
Songless and sad, the dreamy day along?"

My feet turned back into the well-worn ways,
Hollowed between the tree-marge and the rill;
And as I went, old memories did fill
My soul with longing for the bygone days.
The lush scents from the grey-pearled hawthorn maze,
The birds' and breezes' babble and the stream's
Brought back to me the songs I made in dreams,
In the old days long dead; the bright sweet lays,
Hymning high valor in the world's despite;
The long untroubled lapses of swift song,
Brimming with ecstacy the luminous night,
As a thrush, piping, fills it; sweet and strong
And pure as ripples of the fresh sun's light,
Filling the glad green glades and aisles along.

There walked for me along the flower-hung glades
The shadowy figures of the world of song
Of my pure youth, a white and rosy throng
Of fair tall queens and lily-drooping maids,
Shadowing pink cheeks with hyacinthine braids
And feathered gold of many-glancing locks.
The mailed knights clashed together in the shocks
Of clamorous war; and through the spangled shades
The mystic echoes of old questing went.
There was no thing in all that dream untold
For me, upon the woods with hawthorn sprent,
Of the old life; and in the primrose-gold,
The new came back to me with dreariment,
In memories of the love that long lies cold.

JOHN PAYNE.

A MAY SONG.

THE CALL.

COME away! come away!
The sea is blue, and the sky is blue,
The woods are green, and the fields are green,
The golden sun and the silvery sheen,
They call and call for you.
The waves on the shore are playing, playing,
The flowers in the breeze are swaying, swaying,
The whole wide world is out a-Maying
To-day, to-day.

Come away! come away!
The sea is song, and the sky is song,
Music is here, and music is there,
And life and love are everywhere,
Singing the whole day long!
The tide on the beach is swaying, swaying,
The sun with the clouds is playing, playing,
And life and love are gone a-Maying
To-day, to-day.

THE ANSWER.

I must stay, I must stay;
The song of the sea is not for me,
Nor golden bowers of cowslip flowers
Nor vision bright of sunbeam showers;
No fresh green spring I see,
No fragrant breeze is round me playing,
No glorious ocean tide is swaying,
Yet my world, too, is gone a-Maying
To-day, to-day.

Let me stay! let me stay!
There is music here, as everywhere;
And sky pale blue, and sunshine too;
For eyes that love to read life true
Love seeth all things fair.
Like meadow flowers in breezes swaying,
All radiant hopes are round me playing,
My very heart is out a-Maying
To-day, to-day!

GENEVIEVE MARY IRONS.

MAY EVENING.

The breath of springtime at this twilight hour
Comes through the gathering glooms,
And bears the stolen sweets of many a flower
Into my silent rooms.

Where hast thou wandered, gentle gale, to find
The perfumes thou dost bring?
By brooks, that through the wakening meadows wind,
Or brink of rushy spring?

Or woodside, where, in little companies,
The early wild flowers rise,
Or sheltered lawn, where, mid encircling trees,
May's warmest sunshine lies?

Now sleeps the hummingbird, that, in the sun,
Wandered from bloom to bloom;
Now, too, the weary bee, his day's work done,
Rests in his waxen room.

Now every hovering insect to his place
Beneath the leaves hath flown;
And, through the long, night hours, the flowery race
Are left to thee alone.

O'er the pale blossoms of the sassafras
And o'er the spice-bush spray,
Among the opening buds, thy breathings pass,
And come embalmed away.

. . . . . .

William Cullen Bryant.

RE-AWAKENING.

Within a spot where slept the silent dead,
I wandered once when spring had kissed the earth,
And set around its breast an emerald girth
Of grass, entangling roses white and red;
Among the leafy branches overhead
The mating robins twittered in their mirth;
All Nature seemed rejoicing in new birth
Beneath the canopy the blue skies spread:
And as I sat beside one mossy stone
Kissed by a hundred suns of summer skies,
A sudden joy came to my heart, alone
Among those graves, to think the dead shall rise
In God's eternal spring when sounds are blown
On angels' instruments in Paradise!

Frank Dempster Sherman.

MAY.

Hark! The sea-faring wild-fowl loud proclaim
My coming, and the swarming of the bees.
These are my heralds, and behold! my name
Is written in blossoms on the hawthorn-trees.
I tell the mariner when to sail the seas:
I waft o'er all the land from far away
The breath and bloom of the Hesperides,
My birthplace. I am Maiä. I am May.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.
The Poet's Calendar.

MOONLIGHT IN MAY.

THANKS! for I understand you, happy Night!
And smile with you at all that made me sad,
Drawn unawares beyond all griefs I had
Into the truthfulness of clear moonlight,
Before whose frankness I can banish quite
The old forlorn endeavor to be glad,
And carelessly stand listening as I please
To the low rustle on the sparkling shore
Of conscious waves, that, rippling at their ease,
Outrun the light and lead it on before;
Or to the murmur of the moonlit trees,
Whose time of waiting and reserve is o'er,
Whom spring has taught to captivate the breeze,
And charm the nights made musical once more.

ROBERT KELLEY WEEKS.

MAY TIME.

YES, it is May! though not that the young leaf pushes its velvet
Out of the sheath, that the stubbornest sprays are beginning to bourgeon,
Larks responding aloft to the mellow flute of the bluebird,
Nor that song and sunshine and odors of life immingled
Even as wines in a cup; but that May, with her delicate philtres

Drenches the veins and the valves of the heart, a double possession,
Touching the sleepy sense with sweet, irresistible languor,
Piercing, in turn, the languor with flame: as the Spirit requickened
Stirred in the womb of the world, foreboding a birth and a being!

Who can hide from her magic, break her insensible thraldom,
Clothing the wings of eager delight as with plumage of trouble?
Sweeter, perchance, the embryo spring, forerunner of April,
When on banks that slope to the south the saxifrage wakens,
When, beside the dentils of frost that cornice the roadside,
Weeds are a promise, and woods betray the trailing arbutus.
Once is the sudden miracle seen, the truth and its rapture
Felt, and the pulse of the possible May is throbbing already.
Thus unto me, a boy, the clod that was warm in the sunshine,
Murmurs of thaw, and imagined hurry of growth in the herbage,
Airs from over the southern hills — and something within me

Catching a deeper sign from these than ever the senses —
Came as a call: I awoke, and heard, and endeavored to answer.
Whence should fall in my lap the sweet, impossible marvel?
When would the silver fay appear from the willowy thicket?
When from the yielding rock the gnome with his basket of jewels?
"When, ah when?" I cried on the steepest perch of the hillside
Standing with arms outspread, and waiting a wind that should bear me
Over the apple-tree tops and over the farms of the valley.

. . . . . .

BAYARD TAYLOR.

SONG OF THE PRINCESS MAY.

MARCH and April go your way!
You have had your fitful day;
Wind and shower, and snow and sleet,
Make wet walking for my feet,

For I come unsandaled down
From the hillsides bare and brown;
But wherever I do tread
There I leave a little thread

Of bright emerald, softly set
Like a jewel in the wet;
And I make the peach-buds turn
Pink and white, until they burn

Rosy red within their cells;
Then I set the blooming bells
Of the flowery alder ringing,
And the apple blossoms swinging

In a shower of rosy snow
As I come and as I go
On my gay and jocund way,
I, the merry Princess May.

NORA PERRY.

IN THE SPRING.

IT is good to be young in the spring, but to breathe, but to be,
When the woods are tumultuous with song, the leaf freshly unfurled,
To break into joy as the blossom breaks forth of the tree,
In the on-coming tide which is lightening the heart of the world.

. . . . . .

Comes a time when the pulse of the season has risen still higher,
When the crown of the year is of May, but not yet of the rose,

When the trees through a mist of soft leaves seem
to gladly respire
The air that is balm, and to drink of the sun-
shine that glows;

When the lilac still blushes, the lilies lie folded be-
neath,
When the broom and laburnum are tossing or
shedding their gold,
And the hand of the bountiful Giver o'er meadow
and heath,
In gorse and in kingcup is scattering riches un-
told;

When the moist living green of the nethermost
boughs of the elm
Rises up as a verdurous breath, and a robe seems
to cling
Round the boles of the birch, that show fair through
the tremulous film,
As the silvery limbs of a Dryad in vesture of
spring.

When the larch in its youth, and the king of the
forest discrowned,
The garlanded age of the thorn, and the succu-
lent weed
Born in yesterday's shower — all things that have
root in the ground
Are alive and abloom in the sun, from the oak to
the reed.

EMILY [DAVIS] PFEIFFER.

MAY.

A RUSH last night of pinions sweeping by,
And Winter passed with a grim retinue!
He holds his court where arctic skies imbue
The flashing snows with tropic brilliancy,
And orange morns with crimson sunsets vie.
The wizard king has left his daughters three,
And grants to each awhile the regency;
His daughters three, like those our Shakespeare drew.
Fierce are the eyes of March, as Goneril's eyne;
April like Regan, falser is than fair;
True as Cordelia's smiles, May's glances shine;
Ermine he left with those, and jewels rare,
But to his youngest, May, gives power to free
The flowers they leave in drear captivity.

ANNIE LEUTHAL SMITH.

LOOK HOW IN MAY.

LOOK how in May the rose
At sulphur's azure fumes,
In a short space her crimson blush doth lose,
And, all amazed, a pallid white assumes.
So time our best consumes,
Makes youth and beauty pass,
And what was pride turns horror in our glass.

WILLIAM DRUMMOND.

MAY.

How softly comes the breath of bloom
From quiet garden closes!
And, blended in a rare perfume,
The royal scent of roses!
How tender is the touch of May
While gentle winds are blowing,
And in a sweet yet silent way,
All sylvan things are growing.

How brilliant is the morning dew
Amid the fields of clover!
Beneath a stainless arch of blue
The mock-bird is a rover;
His songs are echoed o'er the hills,
Their boon of music bringing,
Till all the land with wonder fills
To hear his rapturous singing.

How gracious is the light that gleams
Across the dancing billows,
Or with a chastened splendor beams
Above the drooping willows!
How fair are May's benignant feet
O'er rugged vales and mountains,
And how her magic pulses beat
Beside the brooks and fountains!

What sudden fervor thrills her blood,
Through grove or garden straying,

To linger o'er some tardy bud,
And chide its long delaying!
What pure contentment fills her breast,
Through thick-leaved forests roaming,
To find the peaceful birds at rest
Beneath the dews of gloaming!

What month so musical and bright,
So rife with vernal glory,
All garmented in air and light,
Like some Arcadian story!
Oh! fragrant is the breath of May
In tranquil garden closes,
And soft yet regal is her sway
Among the springtide roses.

WILLIAM HAMILTON HAYNE.

SPRING.

SPRING, the sweet spring, is the year's pleasant king:
Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in ring,
Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing,
Cuckoo, jug, jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo.

The palm and may make country houses gay,
Lambs frisk and play, the shepherds pipe all day,
And, hear we aye, birds tune their pretty lay,
Cuckoo, jug, jug, pu-wee, to-witta-woo.

The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss our feet,
Young lovers meet, old wives a sunning sit;
In every street, these tunes our ears do greet,
Cuckoo, jug, jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo.
Spring, the sweet spring.

THOMAS NASH.
Summer's Last Will and Testament.

SWEET LAGGARD, COME.

SWEET laggard, come! and list the drowsy chime
Of happy bees, 'neath umbrage of the lime:
The Spring is here, come thou and be my Spring!
The trees put on their leaves while west winds sing,
Do thou put on the love my heart doth bring.

Sweet laggard, come! Waste not the vernal time,
Enjoy the breath of Love's delicious prime.
The Spring is here, come thou and be my Spring!
Sweet laggard, come!

The golden wren doth like a blossom swing,
And hark! the curlews clamor on the wing.
Sweet laggard, come! and list thy lover's rhyme,
As up the starry ways of love we climb,
Thou queen of all my song, and I thy king.
Sweet laggard, come!

WILLIAM WILSEY MARTIN.

WHEN MAY FOLLOWS.

. . . After April, when May follows,
And the white-throat builds, and all the swallows,
Hark! where my blossomed pear tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops, at the bent spray's edge,
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower.

Robert Browning.

MAY.

Would that thou couldst last for aye,
Merry, ever-merry May!
Made of sun-gleams, shade and showers,
Bursting buds, and breathing flowers!
Dripping-locked, and rosy-vested,
Violet slippered, rainbow-crested;
Girdled with the eglantine,
Festooned with the dewy vine:
Merry, ever-merry May,
Would that thou couldst last for aye!

. . . . . .

William D. Gallagher.

MAY IN THE SWAN WOODS.

Not as where swoons the trancèd lark
Over our dewy mother isle,
When May exiles the warming dark
With one intoxicating smile;
Not as where hawthorn snows deride
December's coverlet of rime,
And the lush flowers conspire to hide
The brand of earth's primeval crime;
Where hangs along each lapsing stream,
As myrrh o'er some cathedral floor,
The golden crocus' heavy steam,
Each minute richer than before;
Where song and odor bribe the hours,
Descendest thou, O May! in this bleak clime of ours.

Some pallid power instead of thee,
Sings through morn's cage of golden wire
A doleful ditty fitfully,
Strains which depress and swift expire.
I look into the dewless air,
The sunshafts fall, bright-barbed, around;
In the dead sky the branches bare
Stand, corpse-like, with the sunshine crowned.
I thirst, and find not by the brook
The savor of the sappy grass,
Its sifting waters have not shook
One flower-bell through the vaulted pass;
Swollen with snow, its languid sheet
Tumbles in sullen curves beside the maple's feet.

Reclined in winter's magic trance,
Yon rock o'erlooks the shaded hill,
Musing with stony countenance
Upon its last year's garlands still.
In whistling shreds around its brow,
They wail when cuffs the hardy wind,
Stung with the torture of the snow,
By Love untutored to be kind.
Yet, where the uncertain rays repose
All day upon the mellowing bank,
Through the sere twigs there faintly shows
Spring's vanguard, marching rank on rank.
Like elfin sworders, on they press,
Their green blades drawn in dauntless files,
Gilding the dreary duskiness,
Till, championed, May exults and pays them back
in smiles!

Wandering in the crackling wood,
The songless boughs repel my feet,
Not loving mortal should intrude,
To spy their winter-long defeat.
The dwarf oak clutches at me oft,
With skinny leaves which seem like hands;
And round me, trailed o'er mosses soft,
The vines involve their twisted bands.
The robin from the granite wall
Clucks to the long delaying choir;
And the thawed snake uncoils to crawl,
And bask his dappled coat of fire.

The snake unlocks his slimy jaws,
To hiss me forth from his retreat;
And gaffer robin maketh pause
To bid me from the wood, till now his silent seat.

THOMAS GOLD APPLETON.

TO THE DANDELION.

DEAR common flower, that grow'st beside the way,
Fringing the dusty road with harmless gold,
First pledge of blithesome May,
Which children pluck, and, full of pride uphold,
High-hearted buccaneers, o'erjoyed that they
An Eldorado in the grass have found,
Which not the rich earth's ample round
May match in wealth, thou art more dear to me
Than all the prouder summer blooms may be.

Gold such as thine ne'er drew the Spanish prow
Through the primeval hush of Indian seas,
Nor wrinkled the lean brow
Of age, to rob the lover's heart of ease;
'Tis the Spring's largess, which she scatters now
To rich and poor alike, with lavish hand,
Though most hearts never understand
To take it at God's value, but pass by
The offered wealth with unrewarded eye.

Thou art my tropics and mine Italy;
To look at thee unlocks a warmer clime;
The eyes thou givest me
Are in the heart, and heed not space or time:
Not in mid-June the golden-cuirassed bee
Feels a more summer-like warm ravishment
In the white lily's breezy tent,
His fragrant Sybaris, than I, when first
From the dark green thy yellow circles burst.

Then think I of deep shadows on the grass,
Of meadows where in sun the cattle graze,
Where, as the breezes pass,
The gleaming rushes lean a thousand ways,
Of leaves that slumber in a cloudy mass,
Or whiten in the wind, — of waters blue
That from the distance sparkle through
Some woodland gap, — and of a sky above
Where one white cloud like a stray lamb doth move.

My childhood's earliest thoughts are linked with thee;
The sight of thee calls back the robin's song,
Who, from the dark old tree
Beside the door, sang clearly all day long,
And I, secure in childish piety,
Listened as if I heard an angel sing
With news from heaven, which he could bring
Fresh every day to my untainted ears
When birds and flowers and I were happy peers.

How like a prodigal doth Nature seem,
When thou, for all thy gold, so common art!
Thou teachest me to deem
More sacredly of every human heart,
Since each reflects in joy its scanty gleam
Of heaven, and could some wondrous secret show,
Did we but pay the love we owe,
And with a child's undoubting wisdom look
On all these living pages of God's book.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

SPRING.

THE sootè[1] season that bud and bloom forth brings
With green hath clad the hill, and eke the vale;
The nightingale with feathers new she sings;
The turtle to her make[2] hath told her tale.
Summer is come, for every spray now springs,
The hart hath hung his old head on the pale;
The buck in brake his winter coat he flings;
The fishes flete with new repairèd scale;
The adder all her slough away she slings;
The swift swallow pursueth the fliès smale;
The busy bee her honey now she mings;[3]
Winter is worn that was the flowers' bale.
And thus I see among these pleasant things
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs!

HENRY HOWARD.
Earl of Surrey.

[1] Sweet. [2] Mate. [3] Mixes.

WHY SHOULD MAY REMEMBER.

Why should May remember
  March, if March forget
The days that began with December,
  The nights that a frost could fret?

All their griefs are done with
  Now the bright months bless
Fit souls to rejoice in the sun with,
  Fit heads for the wind's caress;

Souls of children quickening
  With the whole world's mirth,
Heads closelier than field-flowers thickening
  That crowd and illuminate earth,

Now that May's call musters
  Files of baby bands
To marshal in joyfuller clusters
  Than the flowers that encumber their hands.

Algernon Charles Swinburne.
A Dark Month.

MAY.

All maiden lives that waned in their young prime,
From the first throbbing of the heart of Time,
Re-live, I dream, in May's mysterious grace,
Sing through her birds, and blossom in her face.

Paul Hamilton Hayne.

MAY MORNING.

Warm, wild, rainy wind, blowing fitfully,
Stirring dreamy breakers on the slumberous May sea,
What shall fail to answer thee? What thing shall withstand
The spell of thine enchantment, flowing over sea and land?

All along the swamp-edge in the rain I go;
All about my head thou the loosened locks doth blow;
Like the German goose-girl in the fairy tale,
I watch across the shining pool my flock of ducks that sail.

Redly gleam the rose-haws, dripping with the wet,
Fruit of sober autumn, glowing crimson yet;
Slender swords of iris leaves cut the water clear,
And light green creeps the tender grass, thick spreading far and near.

Every last year's stalk is set with brown or golden studs;
All the boughs of bayberry are thick with scented buds;
Islanded in turfy velvet, where the ferns uncurl,
Lo! the large white duck's egg glimmers like a pearl!

Softly sing the billows, rushing, whispering low,
Freshly, O deliciously, the warm, wild wind doth blow!

Plaintive bleat of new-washed lambs comes faint
from far away;
And clearly cry the little birds, alert and blithe and
gay.

O happy, happy morning! O dear, familiar place!
O warm, sweet tears of heaven, fast falling on my
face!
O well-remembered, rainy wind, blow all my care
away,
That I may be a child again this blissful morn of
May.

MRS. CELIA [LAIGHTON] THAXTER.

MAY.

MAY is a pious fraud of the almanac,
A ghastly parody of real spring
Shaped out of snow and breathed with eastern wind;
Or if, o'er-confident, she trust the date,
And, with her handful of anemones,
Herself as shivery, steal into the sun,
The season need but turn his hour-glass round,
And Winter, suddenly, like crazy Lear,
Reels back, and brings the dead May in his arms,
Her budding breasts and wan dislustred front
With frosty streaks and drifts of his white beard
All overblown.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.
Under the Willows.

HEAT.

HITHER rolls the storm of heat;
I feel its finer billows beat
Like a sea which me infolds;
Heat with viewless fingers moulds,
Swells, and mellows, and matures,
Paints, and flavors, and allures,
Bird and brier inly warms,
Still enriches and transforms,
Gives the reed and lily length,
Adds to oak and oxen strength,
Transforming what it doth infold,
Life out of death, new out of old,
Painting fawns' and leopards' fells,
Seethes the gulf-encrimsoning shells,
Fires gardens with a joyful blaze
Of tulips, in the morning's rays.
The dead log touched bursts into leaf,
The wheat-blade whispers of the sheaf.
What god is this imperial Heat,
Earth's prime secret, sculpture's seat?
Doth it bear hidden in its heart
Water-line patterns of all art?
Is it Dædalus? is it Love?
Or walks in mask almighty Jove,
And drops from Power's redundant horn
All seeds of beauty to be born?

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.
May-Day.

MAY.

THE voice of one who goes before to make
The paths of June more beautiful, is thine,
Sweet May! Without an envy of her crown
And bridal; patient stringing emeralds
And shining rubies for the brows of birch
And maple; flinging garlands of pure white
And pink, which to their bloom add prophecy;
Gold cups o'erfilling on a thousand hills
And calling honey-bees; out of their sleep
The tiny summer harpers with bright wings
Awaking, teaching them their notes for noon;
O May, sweet-voiced one, going thus before,
Forever June may pour her warm red wine
Of life and passion, — sweeter days are thine!

MRS. HELEN MARIA [FISKE] [HUNT] JACKSON.

FANTASIE DE PRINTEMPS.

IN the aisles of the orchard fair blossoms are drifting,
The white petals drop one by one,
And the tulip's pale stalk from the garden is lifting
A goblet of gems to the sun!

Come ramble awhile through this exquisite weather
Of days that are fleet to pass,
When the stem of the willow shoots out a green feather,
And buttercups burn in the grass!

When, pushing the soil from her bonny pink shoulders,
The clover glides forth to the world,
And the fresh mosses gleam on the grey rugged boulders,
With delicate May-dew impearled!

. . . . . .

What vows to their sweethearts the gay robins utter!
No marvel such wooers are heard!
Heigh-ho! how the bosoms that scorn us would flutter,
If man could make love like a bird!

EDGAR FAWCETT.

DARK SPRING.

Now the mavis and the merle
Lavish their full hearts in song,
Peach and almond boughs unfurl
White and purple blooms along
A blue burning air,
And all is very fair.
But ah! the silence and the sorrow
I may not borrow
Any anodyne for grief
From the joy of flower or leaf,
No healing to allay my pain
From the cool of air and rain;
Every sweet sound grew still,

Every fair color pale,
When his life began to wane;
They may never live again!
A child's voice and visage will
Evermore about me fail.
Ah! the silence and the sorrow!
Now my listless feet will go
Laboring ever as in snow:
Though the year with glowing wine
Fill the living veins of vine;
Though the glossy fig may swell,
And night hear her Philomel;
Though the sweet lemon blossom breathe,
And fair Sun his falchion wreathe
With crimson roses at his foot,
All is desolate and mute;
Dark to-day, and dark to-morrow,
Ah! the silence and the sorrow!

RODEN BERKELEY WRIOTHESLEY NOEL.
Love and Loss.

FLED ARE THE FROSTS.

FLED are the frosts and now the fields appear
Re-clothed in fresh and verdant diaper;
Thawed are the snows and now the lusty spring
Gives to each mead a neat enameling;
The palms put forth their gems, and every tree
Now swaggers in her leafy gallantry.
. . . . . .

ROBERT HERRICK.

MAY.

Sweet month of Mary, month of May,
What pale pure flowerets strew thy way;
Bellissima!

Low lilies press about thy feet
With violets changing kisses sweet;
Dulcissima!

While through the snow that latest lingers
The Mayflower thrusts her fairy fingers;
Rubentissima!

As through the Virgin's holy mood
Struck tender joys of motherhood;
Sanctissima!

Even thy moon, so cold and clear,
Shines with a beauty half austere;
Splendissima!

While chill pure winds from eastern seas
Enfold no dream of tropic breeze;
Purissima!

. . . . . .

But, month of Mary, month of May,
Still with our love we'll strew thy way;
Bellissima!

For O, sweet maiden of the year,
We cannot choose but hold thee dear;
Carissima!

Mrs. Jane [Goodwin] Austin.

MAY IN KINGSTON.

Our old colonial town is new with May:
The loving trees that clasp across the streets,
Grow greener sleeved with bursting buds each day.
Still this year's May the last year's May repeats;
Even the old stone houses half renew
Their youth and beauty, as the old trees do.

High over all, like some divine desire
Above our lower thoughts of daily care,
The grey, religious, heaven-touching spire
Adds to the quiet of the springtime air;
And over roofs the birds create a sea,
That has no shore, of their May melody.

Down through the lowlands now of lightest green,
The undecided creek winds on its way.
There the lithe willow bends with graceful mien,
And sees its likeness in the depths all day;
While in the orchards, flushed with May's warm light,
The bride-like fruit-trees dwell, attired in white.

But yonder loom the mountains old and grand,
That off, along dim distance, reach afar,
And high and vast, against the sunset stand,
A dreamy range, long and irregular,
A caravan that never passes by,
Whose camel-backs are laden with the sky.

. . . . . .

Henry Abbey.

APPLE BLOSSOMS.

THE apple trees with bloom are all aglow:
Soft drifts of perfumed light:
A miracle of mingled fire and snow:
A laugh of spring's delight.

Their ranks of creamy splendor pillow deep
The valleys pure repose;
On mossy walls, in meadow nooks, they heap
Surges of frosted rose.

Around old homesteads, clustering thick, they shed
Their sweets to murmuring bees,
And o'er hushed lanes and wayside fountains spread
Their pictured canopies.

Green-breasted knolls and forest edges wear
Their beautiful array;
And lonesome graves are sheltered, here and there,
With their memorial spray.

The efflorescence on unnumbered boughs
Pants with delicious breath;
O'er me seem laughing eyes and fair, smooth brows,
And shapes too sweet for death.

Clusters of dimpled faces float between
The soft, caressing plumes,
And lovely creatures 'mong the branches lean,
Lulled by faint, flower-born tunes.

A rude wind blows, and as the blossoms fall,
My heart is borne away:
Fainter and fainter tender voices call
Of my enamored May.

Fainter and fainter, — oh, how strange it seems,
With so much sweetness fled!
I go like one who dreams within his dreams,
That, living, he is dead!

HORATIO NELSON POWERS.
In The Century Magazine.

IN MAY.

SEE! the cautious oak at last,
Owning angry winter past,
Spreads his smiling leaves, — in haste,
Lest the roving woodsman dread,
Haply holding him for dead,
Plying horrid wound on wound,
With gleaming axe should bear him to the ground.
When with emulous blossoms gay,
Snowy chestnut, snowy may,
Laugh by every woodland way;
Then the blushing lilac kisses
His laburnum's golden tresses.
And, while sheepbells mingle sweet
With the newborn·lambkin's bleat,
Loud the pairing thrushes sing,
"Wintertime has turned to Spring."

ALFRED PERCEVAL GRAVES.

IN BLOSSOM TIME.

It's O my heart, my heart,
To be out in the sun and sing!
To sing and shout in the fields about,
In the balm and the blossoming.

Sing loud, O bird in the tree;
O bird, sing loud in the sky,
And honey-bees, blacken the clover seas:
There are none of you glad as I.

The leaves laugh low in the wind,
Laugh low with the wind at play;
And the odorous call of the flowers all
Entices my soul away!

For O but the world is fair, is fair:
And O but the world is sweet!
I will out in the gold of the blossoming mold,
And sit at the Master's feet.

And the love my heart would speak,
I will fold in the lily's rim,
That the lips of the blossom, more pure and meek,
May offer it up to Him.

Then sing in the hedgerow green, O thrush,
O skylark, sing in the blue:
Sing loud, sing clear, that the King may hear,
And my soul shall sing with you!

Ina Donna Coolbrith.

ON A COUNTRY ROAD.

(BALLADE.)

ALONG these low pleached lanes, on such a day,
So soft a day as this, through shade and sun,
With glad grave eyes that scanned the glad wild way,
And heart still hovering o'er a song begun,
And smile that warmed the world with benison,
Our father, lord long since of lordly rhyme,
Long since hath haply ridden, when the lime
Bloomed broad above him, flowering where he came.
Because thy passage once made warm this clime,
Our father Chaucer, here we praise thy name.

Each year that England clothes herself with May,
She takes thy likeness on her. Time hath spun
Fresh raiment all in vain and strange array
For earth and man's new spirit, fain to shun
Things past for dreams of better to be won,
Through many a century since thy funeral chime
Rang, and men deemed it death's most direful crime
To have spared not thee for very love or shame;
And yet, while mists round last year's memories climb,
Our father Chaucer, here we praise thy name.

Each turn of the old wild road whereon we stray,
Meseems, might bring us face to face with one
Whom seeing we could not but give thanks, and pray

For England's love our father and her son
To speak with us as once in days long done
With all men, sage and churl and monk and mime,
Who knew not as we know the soul sublime
That sang for song's love more than lust of fame.
Yet, though this be not, yet, in happy time,
Our father Chaucer, here we praise thy name.

ENVOY.

Friend, even as bees about the flowering thyme,
Years crowd on years, till hoar decay begrime
Names once beloved; but, seeing the sun the same,
As birds of autumn fain to praise the prime,
Our father Chaucer, here we praise thy name.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

MAY.

THEN came fair May, the fairest maid on ground,
Decked all with dainties of her seasons pride,
And throwing flowers out of her lap around:
Upon two brethrens' shoulders she did ride,
The twins of Leda, which on either side
Supported her like to their sovereign Queen:
Lord! how all creatures laughed when her they spied
And leaped and danced as they had ravished been!
And Cupid's self about her fluttered all in green.

EDMUND SPENSER.
The Faerie Queene.

MAY. GROWN A-COLD.

O CERTAINLY, no month this is but May!
Sweet earth and sky, sweet birds of happy song,
Do make thee happy now, and thou art strong,
And many a tear thy love shall wipe away
And make the dark night merrier than the day,
Straighten the crooked paths and right the wrong,
And tangle bliss so that it tarry long.
Go cry aloud the hope the heavens do say!
Nay, what is this? and wherefore lingerest thou?
Why sayest thou the sky is hard as stone?
Why sayest thou the thrushes sob and moan?
Why sayest thou the East tears bloom and bough?
Why seem the sons of man so hopeless now?
Thy love is gone, poor wretch, thou art alone!

WILLIAM MORRIS.

MAY GLADNESS.

THE lark is singing in the blinding sky,
Hedges are white with May. The bridegroom sea
Is toying with the shore, his wedded bride,
And, in the fulness of his marriage joy,
He decorates her tawny brow with shells,
Retires a space, to see how fair she looks,
Then proud, runs up to kiss her. All is fair:
All glad, from grass to sun.

ALEXANDER SMITH.
A Life Drama.

IN MAY.

Now, while the long-delaying ash assumes
  The delicate April-green, and, loud and clear,
Through the cool, yellow, mellow twilight glooms,
  The thrush's song enchants the captive ear;
Now, while a shower is pleasant in the falling,
  Stirring the still perfume that wakes around;
Now, that doves mourn, and from the distance calling,
  The cuckoo answers, with a sovereign sound,—
Come with thy native heart, O true and tried!
  But leave all books; for what with converse high,
Flavored with Attic wit, the time shall glide
  On smoothly, as a river floweth by,
Or as on stately pinion, through the grey
Evening, the culver cuts his liquid way.

DAVID GRAY.
In the Shadows.

MAY.

WHO cares on the land to stay,
Wooing the wilful May;
  Leave the coquette
  To smile or pet
And away to the sea, away!

My beauty, my bark at sea
With the winds and the wild clouds and me;

The low shore soon
Will be down with the moon,
And none on the waves but we.

On! on! with a swoop and a swirl,
High over the clear waves curl;
Tender they prow
Like a fairy now,
Make the blue water bubble with pearl.

Lo! yonder, my lady, the light!
'Tis the last of the land in sight!
Look once, — and away!
Bows down in the spray;
Lighted on by the lamps of the night!

EDWIN ARNOLD.

APPLE BLOSSOMS.

HAVE you seen an apple orchard in the spring?
In the spring?
An English apple orchard in the spring?
When the spreading trees are hoary
With their wealth of promise-glory,
And the mavis pipes his story
In the spring!

Have you plucked the apple blossoms in the spring?
In the spring?

And caught their subtle odors in the spring?
Pink buds pouting at the light,
Crumpled petals baby-white,
Just to touch them, — a delight!
In the spring!

Have you walked beneath the blossoms in the spring?
In the spring?
Beneath the apple blossoms in the spring?
When the pink cascades are falling,
And the silver brooklets brawling,
And the cuckoo bird is calling,
In the spring!

Have you seen a merry bridal in the spring?
In the spring?
In an English apple county in the spring?
When the bride and maidens wear
Apple blossoms in their hair,
Apple blossoms everywhere
In the spring?

If you have not, then you know not, in the spring,
In the spring!
Half the color, beauty, wonder of the spring.
No sight can I remember
Half so precious, half so tender,
As the apple blossoms render
In the spring!

WILLIAM WILSEY MARTIN.

IN MAY.

THAT was a curlew calling overhead,
That fine, clear whistle shaken from the clouds:
See! hovering o'er the swamp with wings outspread,
He sinks where at its edge in shining crowds
The yellow violets dance as they unfold,
In the blithe spring wind, all their green and gold.

Blithe south wind, spreading bloom upon the sea,
Drawing about the world this band of haze
So softly delicate, and bringing me
A touch of balm that like a blessing stays;
Though beauty like a dream bathes sea and land,
For the first time Death holds me by the hand.

Yet none the less the swallows weave above
Through the bright air a web of light and song,
And calling clear and sweet from cove to cove,
The sandpiper, the lonely rocks among,
Makes wistful music, and the singing sea
Sends its strong chorus upward solemnly.

O Mother Nature, infinitely dear!
Vainly I search the beauty of thy face,
Vainly thy myriad voices charm my ear,
I cannot gather from thee any trace
Of God's intent. Help me to understand
Why, this sweet morn, Death holds me by the hand.

I watch the waves, shoulder to shoulder set,
That strive and vanish and are seen no more.

The earth is sown with graves that we forget,
And races of mankind the wide world o'er
Rise, strive, and vanish, leaving nought behind,
Like changing waves swept by the changing wind.

"Hard-hearted, cold, and blind," she answers me,
"Vexing thy soul with riddles hard to guess!
No waste of any atom canst thou see,
Nor make I any gesture purposeless.
Lift thy dim eyes up to the conscious sky!
God *meant* that rapture in the curlew's cry.

"He holds His whirling worlds in check; not one
May from its awful orbit swerve aside;
Yet breathes He in this south wind, bids the sun
Wake the fair flowers He fashioned, far and wide,
And this strong pain thou canst not understand
Is but His grasp on thy reluctant hand."

MRS. CELIA [LAIGHTON] THAXTER.

AS IT FELL UPON A DAY.

As it fell upon a day
In the merry month of May,
Sitting in a pleasant shade
Which a grove of myrtles made,
Beasts did leap and birds did sing,
Trees did grow, and plants did spring,
Everything did banish moan,
Save the nightingale alone.

She, poor bird, as all forlorn,
  Leaned her breast uptill a thorn,
And there sung the dolefulest ditty,
  That to hear it was great pity:
Fie, fie, fie, now would she cry;
Teru, Teru, by and by:
That, to hear her so complain,
  Scarce I could from tears refrain;
For her griefs, so lively shown,
  Made me think upon my own.

"Ah," thought I, "thou mourn'st in vain;
  None takes pity on thy pain!
Senseless trees they cannot hear thee;
Ruthless beasts they will not cheer thee;
  King Pandion he is dead;
All thy friends are lapped in lead;
All thy fellow birds do sing,
  Careless of thy sorrowing:
Even so, poor bird, like thee,
  None alive will pity me."

ROBERT BARNFIELD.

A LATE SPRING.

THE spring, made dreary by incessant rain,
Was well-nigh gone, and not a glimpse appeared
Of vernal loveliness, but light-green turf
Round the deep bubbling fountain in the vale,
Or by the rivulet on the hillside, near

Its cultivated base, fronting the south,
Where in the first warm rays of March it sprung
Amid dissolving snow: save these mere specks
Of earliest verdure, with a few pale flowers,
In other years blowing soon as earth
Unveils her face, and a faint vermeil tinge
On clumps of maple of the softer kind,
Was nothing visible to give to May,
Though far advanced, an aspect more like hers
Than like November's universal gloom.
All day beneath the sheltering hovel stood
The drooping herd, or lingered near, to ask
The food of winter. A few lonely birds,
Of those that in this northern clime remain
Throughout the year, and in the dawn of spring,
At pleasant noon, from their unknown retreat
Come suddenly to view with lively notes,
Or those that soonest to this clime return
From warmer regions, in thick groves were seen,
But with their feathers ruffled, and despoiled
Of all their glossy lustre, sitting mute,
Or only skipping, with a single chirp,
In quest of food. . . .
. . . . . .
Long swollen in drenching rains, seeds, germs and buds
Start at the touch of vivifying beams.
Moved by their secret force, the vital lymph
Diffusive runs, and spreads o'er wood and field
A flood of verdure. Clothed in one short week,
Is naked Nature in her full attire.

On the first morn, light as an open plain
Is all the woodland, filled with sunbeams, poured
Through the bare tips, on yellow leaves below,
With strong reflection: on the last, 'tis dark
With full-grown foliage, shading all within.
In one short week the orchard buds and blooms.

CARLOS WILCOX.
The Age of Benevolence.

THE RHODORA.

IN May, when sea winds pierced our solitudes,
I found the fresh rhodora in the woods,
Spreading its leafless blooms in a damp nook,
To please the desert and the sluggish brook.
The purple petals, fallen in the pool,
Made the black water with their beauty gay;
Here might the redbird come his plumes to cool,
And court the flower that cheapens his array.
Rhodora! if the sages ask thee why
This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,
Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for seeing,
Then beauty is its own excuse for being:
Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!
I never thought to ask, I never knew:
But, in my simple ignorance suppose
The selfsame power that brought me there brought you.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

APPLE BLOSSOMS.

Apple blossoms, budding, blowing,
In the soft May air:
Cups with sunshine overflowing,
Flakes of fragrance, drifting, snowing,
Showering everywhere!

Fairy promises, outgushing
From the happy trees!
White souls unto love-light blushing,
Heavenly thoughts to utterance rushing,
Are not ye like these?

Such an overflow of sweetness
Needs the heart of spring;
In her wealth of bloom is meetness,
Though to the ripe fruit's completeness
All she may not bring.

Words are more than idle seeming;
Blossoms of good will.
What she would do, Love is dreaming;
What she can, ashamed of scheming,
Cramped and stinted still.

Apple blossoms, billowy brightness
On the tide of May,
Oh, to wear your rose-touched whiteness!
Flushing into bloom, with lightness
To give life away!

Lucy Larcom.

A SNOWFLAKE IN MAY.

(TRIOLET.)

I saw a snowflake in the air
When smiling May had decked the year,
And then 'twas gone, I knew not where;
I saw a snowflake in the air,
And thought perchance an angel's prayer
Had fallen from some starry sphere;
I saw a snowflake in the air
When smiling May had decked the year.

CLINTON SCOLLARD.

APPLE BLOSSOMS.

STORM-TWISTED, gnarlèd bough,
Bloom forth in beauty now,
Spring breezes woo thee!
Hush the wind's blustering,
Wear thy fresh clustering
Blossoms, close mustering,
Hastening to thee!

Leaf, bud, corolla fair,
Spread in ambrosial air,
Bossy branch cover;
In pink and white array,
Decked for thy bridal day,
Reaching forth graciously,
Welcome thy lover!

MRS. LOUISA PARSONS [STONE] HOPKINS.

IN MAY.

Now that the green hillside has quite
Forgot that it was ever white,
With quivering grasses clothed upon,
And dandelions invite the sun;
And columbines have found a way
To overcome the hard and grey
Old rocks that also feel the spring;
And birds make love and swing and sing
On boughs which were so bare of late;
And bees become importunate;
And butterflies are quite at ease
Upon the well-contented breeze,
Which only is enough to make
A shadowy laughter on the lake;
And all the clouds that here and there
Are floating, melting in the air,
Are such as beautify the blue;
Now what is worthier, May, than you
Of all my praise, of all my love,
Except whom you remind me of?

ROBERT KELLEY WEEKS.

MAY.

OVER the hilltop and down in the meadow-grass
Heaven like dew on the waking earth lies;
Part of it, dear, is the blue of these violets,
Best of it all, I find in your eyes.

WILLIS BOYD ALLEN.

SONG TO MAY.

May, queen of blossoms
And fulfilling flowers,
With what pretty music
Shall we charm the hours?
Wilt thou have pipe and reed,
Blown in the open mead?
Or to the lute give heed
In the green bowers?

Thou hast no need of us,
Or pipe or wire,
Thou hast the golden bee
Ripened with fire;
And many thousand more
Songsters that thee adore,
Filling earth's grassy floor
With new desire.

Thou hast thy mighty herds,
Tame, and free livers;
Doubt not, thy music too,
In the deep rivers;
And the whole plumy flight,
Warbling the day and night;
Up at the gates of light,
See, the lark quivers!

When with the jacinth
Coy fountains are tressed;

And for the mournful bird
  Green woods are dressed,
That did for Tereus pine;
Then shall our songs be thine,
To whom our hearts incline: . . .
  May, be thou blessed!

EDWARD HOVELL-THURLOW.

A QUIET EVE IN SPRING.

'Tis the quiet eve of a northern spring: the village sleeps in the sun
That flames in the west as fair as when the world was new begun.
Tired Labor lays his tools aside and his cramped soul warms with mirth
As he lingers out in the cool spring wind to look on the lovely earth:
For the crocus gleams in the garden plots, primroses shine on the leas,
And faintly, slowly, like gathering flame, the green tint gains on the trees.
The swallow has come from the south once more to live in his last year's nest,
For his heart, too, clings to the olden things and the places his youth knew best:
The newborn bee is out in the fields, — he is laboring, too, as we,
To garner fruit through the sunshine hours for the days he shall never see;

And the heart of man, on this eve of spring, is glad,
and he knows not why,
But he feels that to live is a lovely thing, though at
last he must die.

. . . . . .

J. McREATH.
A Village Idyll.

MAY.

O LOVE, this morn when the sweet nightingale
Had so long finished all he had to say,
That thou hadst slept, and sleep had told his tale;
And midst a peaceful dream had stolen away
In fragrant dawning of the first of May,
Didst thou see aught? didst thou hear voices sing
Ere to the risen sun the bells 'gan ring?

For then methought the Lord of Love went by
To take possession of his flowery throne,
Ringed round with maids, and youths, and min-
strelsy;
A little while I sighed to find him gone,
A little while the dawning was alone,
And the light gathered; then I held my breath,
And shuddered at the sight of Eld and Death.

Alas! Love passed me in the twilight dun,
His music hushed the wakening ouzel's song;

But on these twain shone out the golden sun,
And o'er their heads the brown birds' tune was strong,
As shivering, twixt the trees they stole along;
None noted aught their noiseless passing by,
The world had quite forgotten it must die.

WILLIAM MORRIS.
The Earthly Paradise.

PICTURES OF SPRING.

APPLE blossoms in the orchard,
Singing birds on every tree;
Grass a-growing in the meadows
Just as green as green can be;

Violets in shady places,
Sweetest flowers were ever seen!
Hosts of starry dandelions,
"Drops of gold among the green!"

Pale arbutus, fairy-wind-flowers,
Innocents in smiling flocks;
Coolest ferns within the hollows,
Columbines among the rocks;

Dripping streams, delicious mosses,
Tassels on the maple trees;
Drowsy insects, humming, humming;
Golden butterflies and bees;

Daffodils in garden borders,
Fiery tulips dashed with dew;
Crocus flowers; and, through the greenness,
Snowdrops looking out at you!

MRS. CAROLINE ATHERTON [BRIGGS] MASON.

SPRING IN TUSCANY.

ROSE-RED lilies that bloom on the banner;
Rose-cheeked gardens that revel in spring;
Rose-mouthed acacias that laugh as they climb,
Like plumes for a queen's hand fashioned to fan her
With wind more soft than a wild dove's wing,
What do they sing in the spring of their time?

If this be the rose that the world hears singing,
Soft in the soft night, loud in the day,
Songs for the fireflies to dance as they hear;
If that be the song of the nightingale, springing
Forth in the form of a rose in May,
What do they say of the way of the year?

What of the way of the world gone Maying,
What of the work of the buds in the bowers,
What of the will of the wind on the wall,
Fluttering the wallflowers, sighing and playing,
Shrinking again as a bird that cowers,
Thinking of hours when the flowers have to fall?

Out of the throats of the loud birds showering,
Out of the folds where the flag-lilies leap,
Out of the mouths of the roses stirred,
Out of the herbs on the walls reflowering,
Out of the heights where the sheer snows sleep,
Out of the deep and the steep, one word,

One from the lips of the lily-flames leaping,
The glad red lilies that burn in our sight,
The great live lilies for standard and crown;
One from the steeps where the pines are sleeping,
One from the deep land, one from the height,
One from the light and might of the town.

The lowlands laugh with delight of the highlands,
Whence May winds feed them with balm and breath
From hills that beheld in the years behind
A shape as of one from the blest souls' islands,
Made fair by a soul too fair for death,
With eyes on the light that should smite them blind.

Vallombrosa remotely remembers,
Perchance, what still to us seems so near,
That time not darkens it, change not mars,
The foot that she knew when her leaves were September's,
The face lift up to the star-blind seer,
That saw from his prison arisen his stars.

And Pisa broods on her dead, not mourning,
For love of her loveliness given them in fee;
And Prato gleams with the glad monk's gift
Whose hand was there as the hand of morning;
And Siena, set in the sand's red sea,
Lifts loftier her head than the red sand's drift.

And far to the fair southwestward lightens,
Girdled and sandaled and plumed with flowers,
At sunset over the love-lit lands,
The hillside's crown where the wild hill brightens,
Saint Fina's town of the Beautiful Towers,
Hailing the sun with a hundred hands.

Land of us all that have loved thee dearliest,
Mother of men that were lords of man,
Whose name in the world's heart works as a spell,
My last song's light, and the star of mine earliest,
As we turn from thee, sweet, who wast ours for a span,
Fare well we may not who say farewell.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

MAY MORN SONG.

THE grass is wet with shining dews,
Their silver bells hang on each tree,
While opening flower and bursting bud
Breathe incense forth unceasingly;

The mavis pipes in greenwood shaw,
The throstle glads the spreading thorn,
And cheerily the blithesome lark
Salutes the rosy face of morn.
'Tis early prime;
And hark! hark! hark!
His merry chime
Chirrups the lark:
Chirrup! chirrup! he heralds in
The jolly sun with matin hymn.

Come, come, my love! and May-dews shake
In pailfuls from each drooping bough;
They'll give fresh lustre to the bloom,
That breaks upon thy young cheek now.
O'er hill and dale, o'er waste and wood,
Aurora's smiles are streaming free;
With earth it seems brave holyday,
In heaven it looks right jubilee.
And it is right,
For mark, love, mark!
How bathed in light
Chirrups the lark:
Chirrup! chirrup! he upward flies,
Like holy thoughts to cloudless skies.

They lack all heart who cannot feel
The voice of heaven within them thrill,
In summer morn when mounting high
This merry minstrel sings his fill.

Now let us seek yon bosky dell
Where brightest wildflowers choose to be,
And where its clear stream murmurs on,
Meet type of our love's purity;
No witness there,
And o'er us hark!
High in the air
Chirrups the lark:
Chirrup! chirrup! away soars he,
Bearing to heaven my vows to thee!

WILLIAM MOTHERWELL.

IN SPRING.

THE amorous birds now pair in every brake,
And build their mossy homes in field and brere,
And the green lizard and the golden snake,
Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake.

Through wood and stream and field and hill and ocean
A quickening life from the earth's heart has burst,
As it has ever done, with change and motion,
From the great morning of the world when first
God dawned on chaos; in its stream immersed,
The lamps of heaven flash with a softer light;
All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst,
Diffuse themselves, and spend in love's delight
The beauty and the joy of their renewèd might.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.
Adonais.

SONG OF THE SPRING.

BLUE lies the light upon the hills;
Keen scents of earth steal freshly up,
Mixed with the winy air that fills
The valley like a mighty cup.

Warm winds, blown hither from yon wold,
Come laden with the breath of flowers,
And songs of brooks are blithely trolled
Through all the slumberous, sunlit hours.

From far afield, yet sweet and clear
Above the mingled sounds of spring,
Through all the mellow day I hear
The swinging sower lightly sing.

Like flakes of newly fallen snow,
The blossoms flutter from the trees;
And like far music, faint and low,
I hear the murmur of the bees.

Ah, soul! how good it is to be!
The pulses of the very sod
Awake, and stir mysteriously
Beneath the quickening breath of God.

There is no death; the years shall bring
Thee nearer to some viewless goal,
Where bloom perennial flowers of spring,
And singing streams forever roll.

JAMES BENJAMIN KENYON.

MAY.

Of sunlight and green shade, and songs of birds, a happy blending,
Of perfumes, and sweet sounds, and eyes' delight,
Mild showers, and blooming boughs, a pleasure never-ending,
A gentle coming on of calm, cool night, —
These, these are blessings scattered in our way,
In happy May.

In happy May, — when winter, girt with hideous winds
Seeks his ice caverns, his spies work summer grief;
The canker blasts the bud; the ivy creeping binds
The oak in galling chains; the chill rain spots the leaf;
They plot by night, they plot the livelong day
In mournful May.

GEORGE WALTER THORNBURY.

'TWAS PRIME OF MAY.

'Twas prime of May; and every square became
A murmuring camp of summer. Now and then
A dizzy and bewildered butterfly
Fluttered through noisy streets.

ALEXANDER SMITH.
A Boy's Poem.

WINDERMERE IN MID-MAY.

Could aught arrest the rushing wings of Time
Or fix his shadow on the dial's face,
This were the hour supreme, the perfect place,
Winandermere, in May's eternal prime,
So should you ask her emerald never yield
Her fragrant snow this hawthorn, — thrush and lark
Carol all day, and not one storm-cloud dark
Fright the soft fleeces from heaven's azure field;
The while we drank imperishable delight
From the sun-smitten vale, the lustrous lake,
The opposing purple of the lofty Fells,
And breathed his verse who from the wood-nymph bright
Stole every secret of the whispering brake,
And spoiled the Mountain Spirit of all his spells.

Alfred Perceval Graves.

WHEN NATURE TRIES HER FINEST TOUCH.

When Nature tries her finest touch,
Weaving her vernal wreath,
Mark ye, how close she veils her round,
Not to be traced by sight or sound,
Nor soiled by ruder breath?

John Keble.
The Christian Year.

VITA VITALIS.

When first the spring grasses
  Take motion, and glisten
In sun-litten masses,
Wherethrough the brook passes
  And shimmers and sings;
When first the birds woo me
  To linger and listen,
And watch them upspringing
  On wonderful wings;
When breezes are bringing
Sweet scents to renew me,
Sweet sounds thrilling through me,
  From apple blooms over
  The blossoming clover,
Where bees murmur, clinging
With passionate pleasure,
  And butterflies wander
In silence, at leisure,
  Like spirits that ponder
Inscrutable things;—

Then always and ever,
Despite my endeavor
  To 'scape its control,
Some inflowing sadness
Discolors the gladness
  That freshens my soul;
Some answerless question,
Some subtile suggestion,

Some shyly returning
Unsought recollection;
Some eager projection
Of vague undiscerning,
But passionate yearning;
A hoping, regretting,
Remembering, forgetting;
A groping, a reaching,
Demanding, beseeching;
A strangeness, a dearness,
A distance, a nearness;
Perplexes, excites me,
Repels me, invites me,
And fills me with fear:

With fear of foregoing
My life without knowing
The life that without me,
Above me, about me,
Is ceaselessly flowing
So near me, so near!
So near, and yet ever
Beyond my endeavor
To woo it and win it,
To have it and be it,
To lose myself in it.
I only can see it,
And feel it and hear it,
And love it and fear it,
So willing to bless me,
So stern to repress me.

What is it, — what is it
Which makes me to miss it,
And only to miss it?
  What charm to be spoken?
  What spell to be broken,
Before I regain it
Once more, or attain it
At last, and inherit
  And hold as securely
As any of these,
The life that my spirit
  Remembers obscurely,
Obscurely foresees?

Winged spirits, that wander
In silence and ponder
  Inscrutable things,
Ah! why do ye shun me?
Float over, light on me,
O touch me and thrill me,
With watchfulness fill me!
Nay! fan me and still me,
  Ye wonderful wings,
To slumber, if only,
Me sleeping, my lonely
  Shy spirit, who knew you
  Once haply, can woo you
  To take her unto you
Once more where ye wander
In silence and ponder
  Inscrutable things!

ROBERT KELLEY WEEKS.

SYLVAN MUSINGS.

(IN MAY.)

COUCHED in cool shadow, girt by billowy swells
Of foliage, rippling into buds and flowers,
Here I repose o'erfanned by breezy bowers,
Lulled by a delicate stream whose music wells
Tender and low through those luxuriant dells,
Wherefrom a single broad-leaved chestnut towers;
Still musing in the long, lush, languid hours,
As in a dream I heard the tinkling bells
Of far-off kine, glimpsed through the verdurous sheen,
Blent with faint bleatings from the distant croft,
The bee-throngs murmurous in the golden fern,
The wood-doves veiled by depths of flickering green,
And near me, where the wild "queen fairies" burn,
The thrush's bridal passion warm and soft!

PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE.

IN A MAY DAY HUSH.

WHEN in a May day hush
Chanteth the missel-thrush
The harp o' the heart makes answer with murmurous stirs.

JEAN INGELOW.
The Nightingale Heard by the Unsatisfied Heart.

AN ORCHARD FANCY.

THERE stands a tree in the orchard,
All leafless in its woe,
Yet a little limb bears a handful
Of blossoms white as snow.

A picture of spring and winter
Together, it seems to me,
Or some old bent grandfather,
With his grandchild on his knee.

RICHARD KENDALL MUNKITTRICK.

DANDELIONS.

Now dandelions in the short, new grass,
Through all their rapid stages daily pass;
No bee yet visits them; each has its place,
Still near enough to see the other's face;
Unkenned the bud, so like the grass and ground
In our old country yards where thickest found,
Some morn it opes a little golden sun,
And sets in its own west when day is done.
In a few days more 'tis old and silvery grey,
And though so close to earth it made its stay,
Lo! now it findeth wings and lightly flies,
A spirit form, till on the sight it dies.

JOHN ALBEE.

TO MAY.

MAY, thou month of rosy beauty,
Month, when pleasure is a duty;
Month of maids that milk the kine,
Bosom rich, and breath divine;
Month of bees, and month of flowers,
Month of blossom-laden bowers;
Month of little hands with daisies,
Lovers' love, and poets' praises;
O thou merry month complete,
May, thy very name is sweet!
May was *maid* in olden times,
And is still in Scottish rhymes;
May's the blooming hawthorn bough;
May's the month that's laughing now.
I no sooner write the word,
Than it seems as though it heard,
And looks up and laughs at me,
Like a sweet face, rosily,
Like an actual color bright,
Flushing from the paper's white;
Like a bride that knows her power,
Started in a summer bower.

If the rains that do us wrong
Come to keep the winter long
And deny us thy sweet looks,
I can love thee, sweet, in books,
Love thee in the poets' pages,
Where they keep thee green for ages;

Love and read thee, as a lover
Reads his lady's letters over,
Breathing blessings on the art,
Which commingles those that part.

There is May in books forever;
May will part from Spenser never;
May's in Milton, May's in Prior,
May's in Chaucer, Thomson, Dyer;
May's in all the Italian books;
She has old and modern nooks,
Where she sleeps with nymphs and elves
In happy places they call shelves,
And will rise, and dress your rooms
With a drapery thick with blooms.

Come, ye rains then, if ye will,
May's at home, and with me still:
But come rather, thou, good weather,
And find us in the fields together.

JAMES HENRY LEIGH HUNT.

IN MIDDLE MAY.

THE nightingale, full-toned in middle May,
Hath ever and anon a note so thin
It seems another voice in other groves.

ALFRED TENNYSON.
Balin and Balan.

APPLE BLOSSOMS.

THE soft wind whispered secrets to the apple tree,
Caressed her in his arms and would not let her go
Until the rosy blossoms came triumphantly
To tell the one sweet message that he wished to know.

A timid maiden with her lover lingered there
In silence, clasping hands amid the leaves that fell,
Till one bold blossom drifting down the perfumed air
Just touched her rounded cheek, and bade the blushes tell.

FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN.

MAY.

I FEEL a newer life in every gale;
The winds that fan the flowers,
And with their welcome breathings fill the sail,
Tell of serener hours:
Of hours that glide unfelt away
Beneath the sky of May.

The spirit of the gentle south wind calls
From his blue throne of air,
And where his whispering voice in music falls,
Beauty is budding there;
The bright ones of the valley break
Their slumbers, and awake.

The waving verdure rolls along the plain,
And the wide forest weaves,
To welcome back its playful mates again,
A canopy of leaves;
And from its darkening shadow floats
A gush of trembling notes.

Fairer and brighter spreads the reign of May;
The tresses of the woods
With the light dallying of the west wind play;
And the full-brimming floods,
As gladly to their goal they run,
Hail the returning sun.

JAMES GATES PERCIVAL.

A MAY SONG.

A LITTLE while my love and I,
Before the mowing of the hay,
Twined daisy-chains and cowslip-balls,
And caroled glees and madrigals,
Before the hay, beneath the may,
My love (who loved me then) and I.

For long years now my love and I
Tread severed paths to varied ends;
We sometimes meet, and sometimes say
The trivial things of every day,
And meet as comrades, meet as friends.
My love (who loved me once) and I.

But nevermore my love and I
  Will wander forth, as once, together,
Or sing the songs we used to sing
  In springtime in the cloudless weather;
Some chord is mute that used to ring,
  Some word forgot we used to say
  Amongst the may, before the hay,
My love (who loves me not) and I.

MRS. MARY MONTGOMERIE [LAMB] SINGLETON.

A SONG OF MAY.

My heart is light with May, with May,
  My heart is light with May!
The sky is soft; the coming birds
  Are silent on their way.

The miracle of flower and fruit
  Not yet the Lord hath wrought;
But never ripened summertime
  So bright a day hath brought.

For there is promise in the air,
  And murmurous prophecy;
All breathless and with lifted arms,
  Stand waiting shrub and tree.

To-morrow shall the blossoms glow;
  At dawn the birds will sing;

All through the stillness deep I hear
The rushing tide of spring.

My heart is light with May, with May,
My heart is light with May!
And all the more that coming birds
Are silent on their way.

MRS. MARY [MAPES] DODGE.

THE WOODS IN MAY.

'TIS merry in greenwood, — thus runs the old lay,
In the gladsome month of lively May
When the wild birds' song on stem and spray
Invites to forest bower;
Then rears the ash his airy crest,
Then shines the birch in silver vest,
And the beech in glittering leaves is drest,
And dark between shows the oak's proud breast,
Like a chieftain's frowning tower;
Though a thousand branches join their screen,
Yet the broken sunbeams glance between,
And tip the leaves with lighter green,
With brighter tints the flower:
Dull is the heart that loves not then
The deep recess of the wildwood glen,
Where roe and red-deer find sheltering den
When the sun is in his power.

WALTER SCOTT.
Harold the Dauntless.

SPRING SONG.

WHILE I linger in her room,
Singing idly at her feet,
Si douce est la Marguerite,
Are the clover blossoms sweet,
Are the apple trees in bloom,
While I linger in her room?

Is there murmuring of bees
While I murmur at her feet,
Si douce est la Marguerite?
Is there singing swift and sweet
By the brookside, in the trees?
Is there murmuring of bees?

In the springtime of the year,
Sitting singing at her feet,
Si douce est la Marguerite,
Is there then no other sweet
Thing to see or have or hear
In the springtime of the year?

ROBERT KELLEY WEEKS.

MAY.

New flowery scents strewed everywhere,
New sunshine poured in largess fair,
"We shall be happy now," we say.
A voice just trembles through the air,
And whispers, "May."

Nay, but we *must!* No tiny bud
But thrills with rapture at the flood
Of fresh young life which stirs to-day.
The same wild thrill irradiates our blood;
Why hint of "May"?

For us are coming fast and soon
The delicate witcheries of June;
July, with ankles deep in hay;
The bounteous Autumn. Like a mocking tune
Again sounds, "May."

Spring's last born darling, clear-eyed, sweet,
Pauses a moment, with white twinkling feet,
And golden locks in breezy play,
Half teasing and half tender, to repeat
Her song of "May."

Ah, month of hope! all promised glee,
All merry meanings, lie in thee;
Surely no cloud can daunt thy day.
The ripe lips part in shining mockery,
And murmur, "May."

Still from the smile a comfort may we glean;
Although our "must-be's," "shall-be's," idle seem,
Close to our hearts one little word we lay.
We may not be as happy as we dream,
But then we, — may.

SARAH CHAUNCEY WOOLSEY.

A SPRINGTIME.

One knows the spring is coming:
  There are birds; the fields are green;
There is balm in the sunlight and moonlight,
  A dew in the twilights between.

But ever there is a silence,
  A rapture great and dumb,
That day when the doubt has ended,
  And at last the spring is come.

Behold the wonder, O silence!
  Strange as if wrought in a night:
The waited and lingering glory,
  The world-old, fresh delight!

O blossoms that hang like winter,
  Drifted upon the trees,
O birds that sing in the blossoms,
  O blossom-haunting bees,

O green, green leaves on the branches,
  O shadowy dark below,
O cool of the aisles of orchards,
  Woods that the wild flowers know:

O air of gold and perfume,
  Wind, breathing sweet and sun,
O sky of perfect azure, —
  Day, Heaven and Earth in one!

Let me draw near thy secret,
And in thy deep heart see
How fared, in doubt and dreaming,
The spring that is come in me.

For my soul is held in silence,
A rapture great and dumb,
For the mystery that lingered,
The glory that is come!

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS.

BESIDE THE SEA.

I STRAYED one golden noon in May
'Neath trembling trees where sunbeams lay
Like bright mosaics on the grass.
The roystering robins saw me pass,
And quavered forth low greeting notes
The while they preened their glossy coats.
Down winding paths where tulips burned
And jonquils bright their gold unurned,
I wandered till I saw outreach
A lawn that overlooked the beach.
Athwart its emerald belt was set
A deftly wrought and dainty net,
Recalling mimic wars between
The knights who trod the courts of green
When Pompadour, long, long ago,
With Louis roamed through Fontainebleau.

Beneath a patriarchal pine
I sat and watched the sunlit brine.
A single gull far out at sea
Flew up the still air spirally;
The gleaming of its silvery wing
Was like blown aspen leaves in spring.
White-pinioned ships sailed slowly by
And faded 'twixt the sea and sky,
Each seeking weighty argosies.
The hours sped on like silent bees
That pass at noonday, amber clad;
The lapping of the waves grew sad
As is the song of hermit thrush,
Or rustling of the river rush;
Then calm night came, and soon, afar,
A beacon light shone like a star!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.

IN THE PRIME OF SPRING.

IT was in the prime
Of the sweet springtime.
  In the linnet's throat
  Trembled the love-note,
And the love-stirred air
Thrilled the blossoms there.
  Little shadows danced
    Each a tiny elf,
  Happy in large light
    And the thinnest self.

It was but a minute
In a far-off spring,
But each gentle thing,
Sweetly-wooing linnet,
Soft-thrilled hawthorn tree,
Happy shadowy elf
With the thinnest self,
Live still on in me.
O the sweet, sweet prime
Of the past springtime!

MRS. MARIAN [EVANS] [LEWES] CROSS.
The Spanish Gipsey.

COMO IN MAY.

THE snow had not yet faded from the crest
Where Alpine outskirts envy Italy,
Yet, looking down the terraced walks, we see,
On slopes beneath us, bud with snowy breast,
And crimson-bosomed open roses, pressed
With jasmine's slender arm and starry eye
And nameless twining vines so thick and nigh
Unto the parapet that, unconfessed,
The stones lie hidden in luxuriance;
And where the bloom-girt pathway steepest slants,
A ruined tower looks on the lake's blue trance,
Known by its shape alone, so deep the wall
Is buried in wistaria's purple fall
And countless clustered roses, pink and small.

MRS. MARIANNA [GRISWOLD] VAN RENSSELAER.

A SONG OF SPRING.

With the flying scud, with the birds on the wing,
We wandered out at the close of day;
Our faint hearts swelled with the life of the spring,
As the young buds bourgeon on branch and spray.
As we heard the sheltering coppice ring
With a burst of joy too full for words,
Our hearts sung, too, but of what strange thing
We knew no more than the singing birds.

We stood mid the gorse on the golden hill
As the sun went down in a sea of mist;
Though its glory was lingering around us still,
We were sad at heart, for the end we wist.
A homeless breath that was wandering chill
Had found a voice in the evening breeze,
And the silent birds that had sung their fill
Were asleep in the shade of the feathery trees.

"Soul of the younger springs gone by,
Why haunt us with that breath forlorn,
Avenging with a ghostly sigh,
Too sad for words, the words we scorn?"
We said, when lo, the coppice nigh
Gave forth a voice, and then had done:
It seemed to touch the stars on high,
It almost might recall the sun.

Dear bird of love, fond nightingale,
That firest all the grove with song,

Till we, who catch the tender tale,
Forget the years that do us wrong,
Glad birds that no lost springs bewail,
Sweet hearts that are not sad and wise:
Wake the spring night, young nightingale,
And we will see it with thine eyes.

MRS. EMILY [DAVIS] PFEIFFER.

IN MAY.

. . . ALL the land in flowery squares
Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,
Smelt of the coming summer, as one large cloud
Drew downward; but all else of heaven was pure
Up to the sun, and May from verge to verge,
And May with me from head to heel. . . . .
. . . . . The steer forgot to graze,
And, where the hedgerow cuts the pathway, stood,
Leaning his horns into the neighbor field,
And lowing to his fellows. From the woods
Came voices of the well-contented doves.
The lark could scarce get out his notes for joy
But shook his song together as he neared
His happy home, the ground. To left and right,
The cuckoo told his name to all the hills;
The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm;
The redcap whistled; and the nightingale
Sang loud, as though he were the bird of day.

ALFRED TENNYSON.
The Gardener's Daughter.

MAY.

HEBE'S here, May is here!
The air is fresh and sunny;
And the miser-bees are busy
Hoarding golden honey!

See the knots of buttercups,
And the purple pansies;
Thick as these, within my brain,
Grow the wildest fancies!

Let me write my songs to-day,
Rhymes with dulcet closes;
Four-line epics one might hide
In the hearts of roses.

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH.

MAYTIDE.

'FORE long the trees begin to show belief;
The maple crimsons to a coral reef,
Then saffern swarms swing off from all the willers
So plump they look like yaller caterpillars,
Then grey hossches'nuts leetle hands unfold
Softer'n a baby's be at three days old:
Thet's robin-redbreast's almanick; he knows
Thet arter this ther's only blossom-snows;
So, choosin' out a handy crotch an' spouse,
He goes to plast'rin' his adobë house.

. . . . . .

Then all comes crowdin' in; afore you think,
Young oak-leaves mist the side-hill woods with pink;
The catbird in the laylock-bush is loud;
The orchards turn to heaps o' rosy cloud;
Red cedars blossom tu, though few folks know it,
And all look dipt in sunshine like a poet;
The lime-trees pile their solid stacks o' shade
An' drows'ly simmer with the bees' sweet trade;
In ellum-shrouds the flashin' hangbird clings
An' for the summer vy'ge his hammock slings;
All down the loose-walled lanes in archin' bowers
The barb'ry droops its strings o' golden flowers

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.
The Biglow Papers.

IN MAY.

. . . . . ALL is yclad
With pleasance: the ground with grass, the woods
With green leaves, the bushes with blooming buds.
Young folk now flocken in everywhere,
To gather May baskets and smelling brier:
And home they hasten the posts to dight,
And all the kirk pillars ere daylight,
With hawthorn buds, and sweet eglantine,
And garlands of roses and sops in wine.

EDMUND SPENSER.
The Shepheards Calendar.

THE CANADIAN SPRING.

'Twas May! the spring with magic bloom
Leaped up from winter's frozen tomb.
Day lit the river's icy mail;
  The bland warm rain at evening sank;
Ice fragments dashed in midnight's gale;
  The moose at morn the ripples drank.
The yacht, that stood with naked mast
  In the locked shallows motionless
When sunset fell, went curtseying past
  As breathed the morning's light caress.
The woodsman in the forest deep,
  At sunrise heard with gladdening thrill,
Where yestereve was gloomy sleep,
  The brown rossignol's carol shrill;
Where yestereve the snowbank spread
  The hemlock's twisted roots between,
He saw the coltsfoot's golden head
  Rising from mosses plump and green;
Whilst all around were budding trees,
And mellow sweetness filled the breeze.
A few days passed along, and brought
More changes as by magic wrought.
With plumes were tipped the beechen sprays;
  The birch long dangling tassels showed;
The oak still bare, but in a blaze
  Of gorgeous red the maple glowed;
With clusters of the purest white
Cherry and shadbush charmed the sight
  Like spots of snow the boughs among;

And showers of strawberry blossoms made
Rich carpets in each field and glade
  Where day its kindliest glances flung.
And air too hailed spring's joyous sway;
  The bluebird warbled clear and sweet;
Then came the wren with carols gay,
  The customed roof and porch to greet;
The mock-bird showed its varied skill;
At evening moaned the whippoorwill.
Type of the spring from winter's gloom!
  The butterfly new being found;
Whilst round the pink may-apple's bloom
  Gave myriad drinking bees their sound.
Great fleeting clouds the pigeons made;
When near her brood the hunter strayed
  With trailing limp the partridge stirred;
Whilst a quick feathered spangle shot
Rapid as thought from spot to spot
  Showing the fairy hummingbird.

ALFRED BILLINGS STREET.
Frontenac.

THE FLOWER OF LOVE LIES BLEEDING.

I MET a little maid one day,
  All in the bright May weather;
She danced, and brushed the dew away
  As lightly as a feather.
She had a ballad in her hand
  That she had just been reading,

But she was too young to understand
That ditty of a distant land,
"The flower of love lies bleeding."

She tripped across the meadow grass,
To where a brook was flowing,
Across the brook like wind did pass,
Wherever flowers were growing.
Like some bewildered child she flew,
Whom fairies were misleading:
"Whose butterfly," I said, "are you?
And what sweet thing do you pursue?"
"The flower of love lies bleeding.

"I've found the wild rose in the hedge,
And found the tiger-lily,
The blue flag by the water's edge,
The dancing daffodilly,
Kingcups and pansies, every flower
Except the one I'm needing;
Perhaps it grows in some dark bower,
And opens at a later hour,
This flower of love lies bleeding."

"I wouldn't look for it," I said,
"For you can do without it.
There's no such flower." She shook her head.
"But I have read about it!"
I talked to her of bee and bird,
But she was all unheeding:
Her tender heart was strangely stirred!

She harped on that unhappy word,
"The flower of love lies bleeding!"

"My child," I sighed, and dropped a tear,
"I would no longer mind it;
You'll find it some day, never fear,
For all of us must find it.
I found it many a year ago,
With one of gentle breeding:
You and the little lad you know,
I see why you are weeping so;
Your flower of love lies bleeding!"

RICHARD HENRY STODDARD.

ON THE DOWNS.

UP, up! for the earth is a-Maying,
And heaven herself is arraying
With woven rose
Of cloudlets that float and shimmer,
Pink mists where the sunbeams glimmer
In warm repose.

The boughs new-fledged are flinging
Green silver and gold with singing
Aloft to the blue.
O heart of mine, be merry!
With the flower of the thorn and the cherry,
Sing thy songs too!

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

THE FIELDS IN MAY.

WHAT can better please,
When your mind is well at ease,
Than a walk among the green fields in May?
To see the verdure new,
And to hear the loud cuckoo,
While sunshine makes the whole world gay?

. . . . . .

When the grass is full of flowers,
And the hedge is full of bowers,
And the finch and the linnet piping clear,
Where the branches throw their shadows
On a footway through the meadows,
With a brook among the cresses winding near.

. . . . . .

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM.

IN MAYTIME.

UNDER the apple boughs as I sit
In Maytime, when the robin's song
Thrills the odorous winds along,
The innermost heaven seems to ope;
I think, though the old joys pass from sight,
Still something is left for hearts' delight,
For life is endless, and so is hope.

ANNE WHITNEY.
Bertha.

THE FIRST ROSE.

THE rose that in the springtide ventures forth
To woo the zephyr, with her crimson smiles
And odorous wiles,
Too often chances on the cruel North;
For every kiss of his cold lips,
With poisonous blight her beauty nips.
Till one by one with downcast head
She weeps away her petals red,
And with the last, bereft of life and light
Sighs forth her passionate soul on the dark lap of night.

ALFRED PERCEVAL GRAVES.

BALLADE OF THE MAYTIME.

O LADY mine with the sunlit hair,
The birds are caroling blithe and gay
In the bourgeoning boughs that sway in air
O'er the grassy aisles of the orchard way.
The mock-bird pipes to the busy jay:
There's a gleam of white on the vines that twine
Where your casement opes to the golden day,
O lady mine!

O lady mine with the sunlit hair,
The rills are glad that the month is May:
The dawns are bright, and the eves are fair
O'er the grassy aisles of the orchard way.

The dales have doffed their gowns of grey,
The bending buttercups spill their wine,
There is joy in the heart of faun and fay,
O lady mine!

O lady mine with the sunlit hair,
The bees, like ruthless bandits, prey
On the blooms that part their lips in prayer
O'er the grassy aisles of the orchard way.
From sunny shores where the nereids play
The breezes blow o'er the foamy brine,
And I dream I hear them softly say,
"O lady mine!"

ENVOY.

O lady mine, wilt thou not stray
O'er the grassy aisles of the orchard way,
And list to Love where the wind-flowers shine,
O lady mine?

CLINTON SCOLLARD.

THE WOODWELE IN MAY.

I HEAR you in the orchard hid in clouds of apple flower,
I hear you tapping, tapping, busy woodwele, in my tree;
My heart is glad to hear you in this golden morning hour,
Your tapping is — you cannot know — how sweet a sound to me.

Oh, tap, tap; tap, tap, tap!
The old man hears you, and he lifts his head as white as snow,
And dreams he is the passionate heart of fifty years ago!

The glad church bells were ringing then as they are ringing now;
The orchard was in bloom, and there was Sunday in the air;
My dear love's face was sweeter than the blossom on the bough,
'Twas bluest Maytime in her eyelids and her golden hair!
Oh, tap, tap; tap, tap, tap!
We leaned together, lips to lips; we heard, but could not see,
A woodwele — 'twas not *you*, friend — tapping in that apple tree!

Although 'twas Sunday, still, I thought, no Sabbath-breaker he;
And though to-day is Sunday too, no Sabbath-breaker you;
You cannot break, but you can make, a holy day for me:
Your tapping crowds my trees with bloom, and fills my skies with blue.
Oh, tap, tap; tap, tap, tap!

I hear you, and my cheek is flushed; my button-hole is gay;
I stride erect, — what need have I of any staff to-day?

Oh, woodwele, with the laughing note, I feel my heart beat fast,
My eyes are dim, my cheek is wet, my head grows white again;
For I remember, in the light of that long-vanished past,
How kindly life has dealt with me, how hard with better men.
Oh, tap, tap; tap, tap, tap!
For those church bells, that orchard bloom, that woodwele in the tree,
And all that plighted happiness have kept their pledge to me!

My dear love's eyes are faded and her face is wrinkled now,
And all the golden color changed to silver in her hair;
But when she smiles, — ah, *then* you see the blossom on the bough;
And when she speaks, you feel a sense of May-time in the air!
Oh, tap, tap; tap, tap, tap!
Through all disguise, my dear old wife, be sure I see and know
The pretty maid who loved a poet fifty years ago.

WILLIAM CANTON.

TO THE MONTH OF MAY.

EACH day of thine, sweet month of May,
Love makes a solemn holy-day.
I will perform like duty,
Sith thou resemblest every way
Astræa, queen of beauty.

Both your fresh beauties do partake,
Either's aspect doth summer make,
Thoughts of young love awaking;
Hearts you both do cause to ache,
And yet be pleased with aching.

Right dear art thou, and so is she,
E'en like attracting sympathy,
Gains unto both like dearness;
I ween this made antiquity,
Name thee, sweet May of majesty,
As being both like in clearness.

SIR JOHN DAVIES.
Hymns to Astræa (*Queen Elizabeth*).

THE MAYTIME RAPTURE.

Now are the moments, brief and rare,
When Nature warms with subtle bliss,
Like some chaste maiden, shy of air,
Who gives her lover the first kiss!

The willows o'er the flashing brook
Bow lissome, with fresh-mantled stem,
Like graceful ladies when they look
To find their mirrors praising them!

The orchard aisles, that blooms array
In odorous mimicry of snow,
Are thrilled through every happy spray
With song's mellifluous overflow!

And all the world, with greens that shine,
With breaking buds and wings that flit,
Seems one expectancy divine
Of something God has promised it.

EDGAR FAWCETT.
Four Days.

THE MAY OF THE YEAR.

O SHOW me a season as mild and as merry
As the May of the year in the kingdom of Kerry.
As the May of the year, as the May of the year,
When the eyes of Atlantic, as crystal and clear
As heaven's own blue, are beaming on you;
And the sun moves slowly for love of the flowers
(Such flowers, with the wild bees all a-hum)
And delights to linger above the bowers
(Those very bowers, so dark and dumb,
And sorrowful stripped for O, how long?
But now how green! how full of song!)

And the good sun gazes, with golden gaze,
On the evergreens of our woodland ways:
A gaze so glad, — arbutus and holly
Forget their wintry melancholy
In diamond laughter, and he delays
The happy heedless course of the hours,
And looks with a lingering love-look down
To do his duty
To Irish beauty;
And looks again, with a royal frown,
Steadfast and stern, our boys to burn,
To burn our boys to a braver brown.

So the good sun his course delays
For he loves to lengthen our sweet spring days.

ALFRED PERCEVAL GRAVES.

MOONRISE IN MAY.

LONG lights gleam o'er the western wold
Kindling the brown moss into gold;
The bright day fades into the blue
Of the far hollows, dim with dew,
The breeze comes laden with perfume
From many an orchard white with bloom,
And all the mellow air is fraught
With beauty beyond fancy's thought.

Outspread beneath me, breathing balm
Into the evening's golden calm,

Lie trellised gardens, thickly sown
With nodding lilacs, newly blown,
Borders with hyacinthus plumed,
And beds with purple pansies gloomed;
Cold snowdrops, jonquils pale and prim,
And flamy tulips, burning dim
In the cool twilight, till they fold
In sleep their oriflammes of gold.

With many a glimmering interchange
Of moss and flowers and terraced range
The pleasant garden slopes away
Into the gloom of shadows grey,
Where, darkly green, the churchyard lies
With all its silent memories.
There the first violets love to blow
About the headstones, leaning low;
There, from the golden willows, swing
The first green garlands of the spring,
And the first bluebird builds her nest
By the old belfry's umbered crest.

Beyond, where groups of stately trees
Waiting their vernal draperies,
Stand outlined on the evening sky,
The golden lakes of sunset lie;
With many-colored isles of light,
Purple and pearl and chrysolite,
And realms of cloudland, floating far
Beyond the horizon's dusky bar,
Now, fading from the lurid bloom
Of twilight to a silver gloom,

As the fair moon's ascending beam
Melts all things to a holy dream.

So fade the cloud-wreaths from my soul
Beneath thy solemn, soft control,
Enchantress of the stormy seas,
Priestess of night's high mysteries!
Thy ray can pale the north-light's plume,
And, where the throbbing stars illume
With their far-palpitating light
The holy cloisters of the night,
Thy presence can entrance their beams,
And lull them to diviner dreams.
To thee belong the silent spheres
Of memory, the enchanted years
Of the dead past, the shrouded woes
That sleep in sculptural repose.

Thy solemn light doth interfuse
The magic world wherein I muse,
With something too divinely fair
For earthly hope to harbor there;
A faith that reconciles the will
Life's mystic sorrow to fulfil;
A benison of love that falls
From the serene and silent halls
Of night, till through the lonely room
A heavenly odor seems to bloom,
And lilies of eternal peace
Glow through the moonlight's golden fleece.

MRS. SARAH HELEN [POWER] WHITMAN.

PROPHETIC BIRDS.

On May morn two lovers stood
For the first time in the wood;
And lip wooed lip, and heart wooed heart,
Till words must cease, and tears must start;
And overhead in the rustling green
The birds talked over their fate unseen.

"Sure," said the thrush, "we'll wed them soon;"
"Yea," said the turtle-dove, "in June;"
"They'll make fine sport ere the year is out,"
Said the magpie between a laugh and a shout.
And heedlessly the lovers heard
The senseless babble of bird with bird.

"Sure," croaked the jackdaw, "in July
They'll quarrel, or no daw am I;
Why, let them, since they are but men;"
"They can make it up though," quoth the wren.
And heedlessly the lovers heard
A senseless babble of bird with bird.

"Love with them shall be sweet, ere sad,"
Said the goldfinch, "August shall make them glad."
"Yea," said the oriole, "one rich noon
They shall lengthen love in a golden swoon."
And all this while the lovers heard
But a senseless babble of bird with bird.

"My news is from Prince Popinjay,"
Sighed the hoopoe. "Ah! one August day

They shall dream in the sunset, and fall asleep,
And one shall awake from the dream to weep."
And heedlessly the lovers heard
This senseless babble of bird with bird.

But a nightingale in a far-off shade
That moment silenced the chattering glade,
And sang like an angel from above
Some mystic song of eternal love.
And all this singing the lovers heard
As the senseless babble of bird with bird.

ARTHUR W. E. O'SHAUGHNESSY.

THE BIRDS IN MAY.

. . . OFT in the merry season and the morning of the May
The birds break out a-singing for the world's face waxen gay,
And they flutter there in the blossoms, and run through the dewy grass,
As they sing the joy of the springtide, that bringeth the summer to pass;
And they deem that for them alone was the world wrought long ago,
And no hate and no repentance, and no fear to come they know.

WILLIAM MORRIS.
The Story of Sigurd the Volsung.

WAITING FOR JUNE.

WITHIN the woods the sweet arbutus trails
Its blossoming length. The happy robin sings.
Nature the while a joyous face unveils,
Bright with the sunshine of her countless springs.
The days grow longer; and the strawberries blush,
Ready to ripen in the year's hot noon,
And in the shade, the amorous-voicèd thrush
Waits for thy coming, soft, delicious June.

The angler casts within the swift cascade
The ready line, whereon the gorgeous fly,
To tempt the trout, by skilful hand is played,
Or strong-mouthed salmon as he passes by.
The playful bass leaps glistening from the stream,
And shuns with veering fin the dangerous rocks,
Along his sides the western sunrays gleam,
And swift-winged swallows past me wheel their flocks.

How sweet to rest, ere dawns the summer's heat,
Where violets gaze upward to the sky;
To hear the brooklet murmuring at my feet,
And see its waters as they sparkle by;
To lay my ear close to my mother earth,
And listen to her myriad voices low;
To search the secret of the daisies' birth,
And why, in spring, the wood flowers bud and blow.

The sparrow chirps; the lark upsoars and sings;
The brown-winged beetles slowly past me creep;
And through the shadows flit a thousand things
That make the pulses of my being leap.
O mother Nature! Take me to your breast,
While earth, and air, and sky, are all in tune;
Close to thy heart, a child, I fain would rest,
And wait the coming of delicious June.

ELISHA NORMAN GUNNISON.

ON THE SPRING.

Lo! where the rosy-bosomed Hours,
Fair Venus' train, appear,
Disclose the long-expecting flowers,
And wake the purple year!
The Attic warbler pours her throat,
Responsive to the cuckoo's note,
The untaught harmony of spring;
While, whispering pleasure as they fly,
Cool zephyrs through the clear blue sky
Their gathered fragrance fling.

Where'er the oak's thick branches stretch
A broader browner shade,
Where'er the rude and moss-grown beech
O'ercanopies the glade,
Beside some water's rushy brink
With me the Muse shall sit, and think

(At ease reclined in rustic state)
How vain the ardor of the crowd,
How low, how little are the proud,
How indigent the great!

Still is the toiling hand of care;
The panting herds repose:
Yet hark, how through the peopled air
The busy murmur glows!
The insect youth are on the wing,
Eager to taste the honied spring,
And float amid the liquid noon:
Some lightly o'er the current skim,
Some show their gayly-gilded trim
Quick-glancing to the sun.

To contemplation's sober eye
Such is the race of man;
And they that creep, and they that fly,
Shall end where they began.
Alike the busy and the gay
But flutter through life's little day,
In fortune's varying colors drest:
Brushed by the hand of rough mischance,
Or chilled by age, their airy dance
They leave, in dust to rest.

Methinks I hear in accents low
The sportive kind reply:
Poor moralist! and what art thou?
A solitary fly!

Thy joys no glittering female meets,
No hive hast thou of hoarded sweets,
No painted plumage to display:
On hasty wings thy youth is flown;
Thy sun is set, thy spring is gone:
We frolic while 'tis May.

THOMAS GRAY.

MAYTIME.

A MIST of stars, a glimmering veil
Before the ancient throne of night;
A planet like a sentinel
Upon the outer height.

Far dusky deeps, and wide still air,
Where fainting fragrance rolls along;
A bird that warbles in his dream
Some thrill of broken song.

Thick fruit-flowers languishing for light
Around us in the perfect gloom;
And, as we wait, far off and low,
The distant breakers' boom.

Ah, among all delicious nights,
Give me this air's transcendent swoon;
Enchanted song, enchanted hush,
And May without a moon!

MRS. HARRIET ELIZABETH [PRESCOTT] SPOFFORD.
Fancies.

A SPRING SONG.

Long has been the winter,
Long, long, in vain
We've sought the bud upon the bough,
The primrose in the lane.
Long have skies been dull and grey,
Nipping's been the blast;
But, sing! Summer's coming!
The bee is out at last.
Sing! Winter's flying;
Summer's coming fast;
Humming joy and Springtime,
The bee is out at last.

Loud shouts the cuckoo;
The nested elm round,
Wheels the rook, cawing;
There are shadows on the ground.
Warm comes the breeze and soft,
Freezing days are past.
Sing! Summer's coming!
The bee's out at last.
Sing! Winter's flying;
Summer's coming fast;
Humming hope and Springtime,
The bee's out at last.

WILLIAM COX BENNETT.

LATE SPRING EVENING.

I saw the Virgin-mother clad in green,
Walking the sprinkled meadows at sundown;
While yet the moon's cold flame was hung between
The day and night, above the dusky town:
I saw her brighter than the western gold,
Whereto she faced in splendor to behold.

Her dress was greener than the tenderest leaf
That trembled in the sunset glare aglow:
Herself more delicate than is the brief
Pink apple blossom, that May showers laid low,
And more delicious than's the earliest streak
The blushing rose shows of her crimson cheek.

As if to match the sight that did her please,
A music entered, making passion fain;
Three nightingales sat singing in the trees,
And praised the goddess for the fallen rain;
Which yet their unseen motions did arouse,
Or parting zephyrs shook out from the boughs.

And o'er the treetops, scattered in mid air,
The exhausted clouds, laden with crimson light
Floated, or seemed to sleep; and highest there,
One planet broke the lingering ranks of night;
Daring day's company, so he might spy
The Virgin-queen once with his watchful eye.

And when I saw her, then I worshipped her,
And said, — O bounteous Spring, O beauteous Spring,

Mother of all my years, thou who dost stir
My heart to adore thee and my tongue to sing,
Flower of my fruit, of my heart's blood the fire,
Of all my satisfaction the desire!

How art thou every year more beautiful,
Younger for all the winters thou hast cast:
And I, for all my love grows, grow more dull,
Decaying with each season overpast!
In vain to teach him love must man employ thee,
The more he learns the less he can enjoy thee.

ROBERT BRIDGES.

AT THE CLOSE OF SPRING.

THE garlands fade that spring so lately wove,
  Each simple flower, which she had nursed in dew,
Anemones that spangled every grove,
  The primrose wan, and harebell mildly blue.
No more shall violets linger in the dell,
  Or purple orchis variegate the plain,
Till spring again shall call forth every bell,
  And dress with hurried hands her wreaths again.
Ah, poor humanity! so frail, so fair,
  Are the fond visions of thy early day,
Till tyrant passion and corrosive care
  Bid all thy fairy colors fade away!
Another May new buds and flowers shall bring;
Ah! why has happiness no second spring?

MRS. CHARLOTTE [TURNER] SMITH.

FAREWELL TO SPRING.

I saw this morning with a sudden smart,
Spring preparing to depart.
I know her well and so I told her all my heart.

"Why did you, Spring, your coming so delay,
If, now here, you cannot stay?
You win my love and then unloving pass away.

"We waited, waited, O so long, so long,
Just to hear the ouzel's song.
To-morrow 'twill be hushed, to-day that is so strong.

"Day after day, and dawn again on dawn,
Winter's shroud was on the lawn,
So still, so smooth, we thought 'twould never be withdrawn.

"Now that at last your welcome mimic snow
Doth upon the hawthorn blow,
It bides not on the bough, but melts before we know.

"Scarce hath the primrose o'er the sordid mould
Lavished treasure, than behold!
Our wealth of simple joy is robbed of all its gold.

"When to the woods we hie with feet of mirth,
Now the hyacinths have birth,
Swiftly the blue of heaven fades from the face of earth.

. . . . . .

"First drops the bloom, then darkens the green leaf;
Every thing in life is brief,
Save autumn's deepening gloom and winter's changeless grief."

Then with a smile thus answered me the Spring:
"To my voice and flight you cling,
For I, before I perch, again am on the wing.

"With you were I the whole year round to stay,
'Twould be you that went away,
Your love made fickle by monotony of May.

"Love cannot live save upon love beyond.
Leaving you, I keep you fond,
Not letting you despair, but making you despond.

"Farewell, and love me still, my lover dear,
Love me till another year,
And you, if you be true, will find me here."

Then darker, deeper, waxed the woods; the ground
Flowerless turned, and then embrowned;
And less was of sweet scent, and less was of sweet sound.

Mute was the mavis, moulted was the thorn,
Meads were cut, and lambs were shorn,
And I by Spring was left forsaken and forlorn.

Forlorn, forsaken, shall I be until
Primrose peep and throstle shrill,
And in the orchard gleam the outriding daffodil.

Then shall I know that Spring among the trees
Hiding is, and that the breeze
Anew will bear abroad odors and melodies.

ALFRED AUSTIN.

AT WHITSUNTIDE.

. . . PENTECOST had kindled all the trees
To tremulous thin whispering flames of green,
And given to each a sacred word to say;
And wind-fine voices of the wind-borne birds
Were ever woven in among their words.
Soft-brooding o'er the hamlet where it lay,
The circling hills stood stoled with holy white,
For orchards break to blossom in the night;
And all the morning was one blown blue flower,
And all the world was at its perfect hour.

HELEN GRAY CONE.
Oberon.

A SPRING PICTURE.

A HIGH cliff-meadow lush with spring;
Gay butterflies upon the wing;
Beneath, beyond, unbounded, free,
The foam-flecked, blue, pervading sea.

LEWIS MORRIS.
Pictures.

IN MAY.

From eastern summits, pine-possessed,
The slow sun climbs the reddening skies,
A shaft of color strikes the west,
The phœbe shakes her wings, and flies;
A muffled murmuring in the hive
Grows thicker with the crescent day;
All mummied creatures stir, alive,
And bask beneath the warmth of May.

From brink to base, the hills descend
All steeped in dark and drenched in dew;
The orchards flush from end to end,
The pink azalea flowers anew.
Ere yet those amber cells are sealed
Another moon shall lapse away,
Yet mine the pledge of wood and field,
The empty honeycomb of May.

DORA READ GOODALE.

A SPRING LOVE SONG.

The earth is waking at the voice of May,
The new grass brightens by the trodden way,
The woods wave welcome to the sweet spring day,
And the sea is growing summer blue;
But fairer, sweeter than the smiling sky,
Or bashful violet with tender eye,
Is she whose love for me will never die;
I love you, darling, only you!

O friendships falter when misfortunes frown,
The blossoms vanish when the leaves turn brown,
The shells lie stranded when the tide goes down,
But you, dear heart, are ever true.
The grass grows greenest when the raindrops fall,
The vine clasps closest to the crumbling wall,
So love blooms sweetest under sorrow's thrall;
I love you, darling, only you!

The early robin may forget to sing,
The loving mosses may refuse to cling,
Or the brook to tinkle at the call of spring,
But you, dear heart, are ever true.
Let the silver mingle with your curls of gold,
Let the years grow dreary and the world wax old,
But the love I bear for you will ne'er grow cold;
I love you, darling, only you!

MRS. ELIZABETH ANN [CHASE] [AKERS] ALLEN

MAY AND DEATH.

I WISH that when you died last May,
Charles, there had died along with you
Three parts of spring's delightful things;
Ay, and, for me, the fourth part too.

A foolish thought, and worse, perhaps!
There must be many a pair of friends
Who, arm in arm, deserve the warm
Moon-births and the long evening-ends.

So, for their sakes, be May still May!
Let the new time, as mine of old,
Do all it did for me: I bid
Sweet sights and sounds throng manifold.

Only, one little sight, one little plant,
Woods have in May, that starts up green
Save a sole streak which, so to speak,
Is spring's blood, spilt its leaves between,

That, they might spare; a certain wood
Might miss the plant; their loss were small:
But I, — whene'er the leaf grows there,
Its drop comes from my heart, that's all.

ROBERT BROWNING.

IN MAY.

WHY, ye glories of to-day,
Will ye bring a wet cheek here?
Light and odor, song and breeze,
In delicious concord play;
What but care should fret the tear
When we walk midst joys like these?

It is all too dark to see
Sometimes, what our spirits hold;
All too damp for chords to sound,
Or the rain falls noisily,

Or the wind is fierce and cold,
And our gentle thoughts are bound.

But the tender looks of May
Set them free and light the soul;
Overwhelmed at seeing there
All we ever laid away,
Rapturous sadness gains control:
Tears must come, but not of care.

CHARLOTTE FISKE BATES.

RONDEAU.

WHEN the May moon wanes how fresh is the day!
How sweet the smell of the new-mown hay!
And sweeter still the breath of morn.
A long farewell to the weeks forlorn
Of raw east winds; to the fields away!

Now hail to the apple-blooms' display!
Hail, hail to the meadows' rich array!
And the dewdrop sparkles within the thorn
When the May moon wanes.

The bobolink returns with his roundelay,
The timorous hare from his covert may stray,
He may nibble the blades of the springing corn,
For the hunter, the hunter winds not his horn.
Sweet World! can I ever upbraid thee? Nay, —
When the May moon wanes.

MELVILLE MADISON BIGELOW.

IN WANING MAY.

Doves softly cooing murmurs musical
Gladdened unseen the darksome cloud of pines:
Below bright-hued innumerable wings
Carried love messages from flower to flower.
For Spring's outstretching fingers nearly touched
The Summer's welcoming hands.

Thomas Woolner.
Pygmalion.

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